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A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART.



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A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART.

AN ACCOUNT OF
*THE WRECK OF THE SAILING SHIP,
“WALDERSHARE,”*
FROM THE NARRATIVE OF MR. WILLIAM LEE,
SECOND MATE.

BY
W. CLARK RUSSELL,
AUTHOR OF “THE WRECK OF THE GROSVENOR,” ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

WHEN, four years ago, I wrote "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," the very last misgiving that entered my mind was that it would be questioned on the score of its accuracy. I had passed eight years at sea in the Merchant Service; much of my leisure had been spent in the forecastle among the men, and their arguments and stories were impressed on my memory. Nevertheless, several critics, whose knowledge of the sea I have the best possible reasons for suspecting, determined that various incidents narrated in the "Grosvenor" were impossible. What those incidents were I need not weary the reader by saying here; but it is certain that the incidents which my critics voted im-

possible were all of them *facts*, perfectly familiar to seamen, and within the experience of twenty out of every hundred seafaring men.

Fortunately for my veracity, however, confirmation of my accuracy reached me many months after the book was published, in the form of a narrative quoted in the *Atlantic Monthly Magazine*, a serial of high standing in the United States, and written by many able American authors. The narrative was entitled “The Wreck of the Grosvenor in Real Life.” I offer no apology for quoting it.

“Those of the readers of ‘The Wreck of the Grosvenor’ who, like myself, first read it at the sea-shore, with the accessories of an occasional wild storm and intercourse with some of the finest specimens of sailor character on the Atlantic coast, must have felt in a peculiar manner the photographic reality of the whole story. Striking testimony to the correctness of what sometimes seemed exaggerated has fallen in my way more than once. A broad-breasted manly skipper, in whose company I was thrown

last summer, and whose face has caught much of its bronze while rescuing human lives, had an experience identical with that of the heroine and her father on the rolling deserted hull. A passing ship had taken one boatful from the wreck in a frightful sea; the officer refused to return for the three sailors, of whom one was my narrator, and their lives were saved only by an act of heroism such as is described in the '*Grosvenor*'.

"And now, in a remote corner of the shipping news in my morning paper, among the sadly numerous disasters of the past month, is a story curiously resembling the circumstances of the crisis which came to the *Grosvenor* when off the Bermudas. The reader will remember the mutiny of the crew, led by the ship's carpenter; the death of the captain; the placing of the hero, the second mate, in command; the false reckoning which the latter kept; the supposed nearness to Florida, but real proximity to the Bermudas; and the intention of the mutineers to leave the mate and Miss Robertson on board, after having scuttled

the vessel. Then came the suspense of the counter-plotters—the boatswain being hidden below, instead of dead, as the mutineers supposed—when the carpenter came up from below, after boring auger-holes in the ship's bottom, and deserted the vessel with the mutineers. I copy the coincidence from the report, word for word :—

“‘*Brig L'Avvenire*, from Messina for New York (before reported), arrived in Five Fathom Hole, Bermuda, March 29, in charge of Captain Page, late first officer of barque *Black Prince*, of St. John, N.B. The latter fell in with the brig March 23, lat. $28^{\circ} 40'$, long. 67° . She was drifting about in a crippled condition, with foremast, main-topmast, jibboom with all attached, carried away, and had to all appearances been abandoned. Captain Tyrrell, of the *Black Prince*, took the brig in tow, and towed her for some time, when he found it would be more judicious to adopt another course. He accordingly cut the hawser, and put his first officer with four seamen on board the brig, and ordered them to bring her to Bermuda. With some spare spars from the

Black Prince jury-masts were rigged, and the ship reached port as already mentioned. Captain Page reports that, when he went on board the brig, he found eight feet of water in the hold. He and his crew set to work at the pumps and soon gained on the water. After the water had been lowered, he over-hauled the vessel, and found three auger-holes in the hull, and two three-quarter-inch augers lying near by. One hole was forward quite low down; a second one was opposite the mainmast; and a third one was near the stern-post. After these had been stopped up, the vessel was perfectly tight, and proved herself an excellent sea-boat. The *L'Avvenire* is built of white oak, is a new vessel apparently, and was well fitted. She is loaded with a cargo of oranges, lemons, and wine, and the fruit appears to be in an excellent condition. The vice-marshall in the Court of Admiralty took charge of the ship and cargo, pending the action of the parties interested in them. The vessel had commenced to discharge cargo, April 4, by order of the Court of Admiralty.'

“When it is remembered that soon after the date of picking up the brig there followed one of the severest storms (March 30th) known in many years, the parallel is almost perfect. Could there be even the remotest connection between the wreck of the *Grosvenor* and the wreck of the *L’Avvenire*? Had the book been known on board, or had another ill-treated crew evolved from their inner consciousness just such a liberation as had occurred to the author of the *Grosvenor*? ”—No. 262, August, 1879.

My reason for referring to a former novel by me and quoting the narrative I have given is merely to obtain from the reader of “A Sailor’s Sweetheart” some credit for good faith. The sense of numerous shortcomings makes me anxious to emphasize the one virtue which I honestly know my sea stories possess—I mean their truth. Whatever may be the degree of importance attached to credibility in novel-writing, it is to guard against the charges brought against “The Wreck of the Grosvenor,” that I say there is not an incident in “A Sailor’s Sweetheart” that is not true. The mad-

ness of Captain Flanders, the devotion of Helen Williams, the foundering of the *Waldershare*, the incident of the water-logged brig, the final escape from the island, are all so many facts, based upon two narratives and one personal experience.

W. CLARK RUSSELL.

1880.

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A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART.

CHAPTER I.

BURMARSH.

I HAVE spent some tolerably dismal and sorrowful days in my life, as this story will explain, though I wish I could say that they were all contained in it ; but the saddest day that ever my eyes opened upon was a Wednesday in June, in 1858. It was not that my shore-going holiday was about to end ; though it is true that for more than three whole months I had not clapt eyes on a ship, and that in a day I was to exchange the fine summer country, the lying in bed all night, the milk and fresh butter, the going and coming as I pleased, with no man

to say “sir” to and no master but my own sweet will, for a week’s hard work in the West India Docks, and then a voyage that was likely to last above a year.

But this was not the worst part. Going to sea is nothing to a man who has only the shore to leave and no clinging hands to tear himself away from. Since the death of my poor old mother, who survived my father five years, and died when I was fourteen years old, my hat had covered my family and estate ; I went to sea as naturally as a boy goes home, and only loved the land as holiday ground for a frolic that was always merry enough whilst the money lasted. But now had come something else ; and on this June morning, when I awoke, my heart lay in me as heavy as a deep-sea lead, and mortal man never shaved a gloomier face than the one that glowered upon me from the looking-glass as I turned to and lathered myself. For the truth was that I, William Lee, *ætat* twenty-three, was not only in love, but engaged to be married. I reckoned the engagement was to be a regular Jack’s betrothal, all waiting ; but that would not

make it the less real. The engaged ring was on her finger, and we had both of us enough love and faith to keep our hearts green and patient until the time came for the parson to give her my name, whenever that should be.

She was an orphan, just as I was. Her father, who had been a naval officer and a cousin of my mother, had died and left her three thousand pounds, and her guardian was Mr. Paul Johnson, once a lawyer, but at this time a common-councilman of the borough of Burmarsh, a town in which he had dwelt upwards of fifty years. He was a good-hearted man at bottom, but had a bad opinion of his fellows, and liked to be thought cynical. I believe he was hated by the people he sat amongst at the Town Council meetings, partly because of his mulish trick of voting out of spite, and partly because nearly every week he wrote letters to the local papers, criticizing and sneering at the Corporation. But I took no interest in these doings, and hard as he tried, Councillor Johnson never could succeed in exciting my curiosity as to them;

indeed, I scarcely knew what a councillor meant, and what work he was intended to do. I was only sure that he had nothing to do with the sea.

The old councillor had been at school with my father, and they had been good friends in after life. They came together through a lawsuit, and I have heard my mother say that Mr. Johnson acted nobly to my father on some occasions. Indeed, I have a notion that the old councillor was a sort of connection of mine on my father's side; but I never knew what, and never took the trouble to ask.

When I had come home from a voyage to China, and found my mother dead and the old house let, Mr. Johnson came to look for me, and bade me make his house my home, which I did whenever it suited me to do so; and here it was that I found Helen Williams—whom I shall call Nelly in this narrative, as that is the familiar name to me—when I landed after the voyage immediately preceding the disastrous one of which this book is the record.

I fell in love with her the moment I saw

her, for men are always in a hurry in these matters, and sailors especially, who pass months without seeing a woman. It took her some time to find out what she thought about me, and she wouldn't have done it then if I had not given her a hand, as I may say, and helped her in every way I knew. Her father had only been dead six months, and her grief still hung like a kind of darkness over her; but after a while her love met mine, as the tide of a calm sea comes up the shore with little runnings and a kind of *purr*, and a glancing backwards and forwards, as you shall have seen it, though the forward movement is the steady one and the stronger.

Until just a week before I went away to sea on my seventh voyage, I think it was—that being my first trip as second mate, which I ought to feel ashamed to own, though even in those days berths in the merchant service were as hard to find as whales in the English Channel—I took her for a walk down the river, and there—for it was in the summer-time—as she stood watching the trout jump and the swallows

skimming the water, and the lazy cows beyond chaw, chaw, chawing like a lot of old sailors mumbling their quids, I took her hand in mine and we just told our love to each other in plain words. We then arranged—for she was my master and did what she liked with me, though I never seemed to feel her hand at the helm, so firm and delicate was her control—that she would become downright engaged to me when I came home next time ; for, said she, “ that will give you time to think, and see other faces, and be sure of yourself ; ” and then, if I came home still loving her and wanting her, why, I might slip on a ring, and so she would wait until I could marry her. I asked if she was as likely as I to remain true ? But this was a man’s question that wanted no answer in words, for her smile made me wiser than any amount of language could have done.

I went away loving her ; and whenever I had a chance to send a letter home it was to her ; and I came back loving her. On the very evening of the day of my arrival—no chance having offered before, and she and

I being alone—I drew forth a ring and put it on her finger. She kissed me as I did so, as though this was a ceremony that needed a consecration of that kind ; and God knows she was right. Her kiss made me feel how greatly she loved me. It was the leaping up of her heart that was overjoyed I had returned safe, after the long separation and the daily prayers and fears. For the whole of this time that I was ashore we were throughout the days scarcely longer than an hour for a spell apart. Our devotion made the people of the place talk about us, for in Burmarsh you could not cross a road without some one seeing you and making news of it; and that is the case still, I hear, though the population has nearly doubled since those times.

But now had come the last day. Tomorrow I was to go to London to join my ship as second mate still, though I held a chief-mate's certificate, and on that day week the *Waldershare* was to sail.

Councillor Johnson's house was in the High Street, a little way above the town, and about a stone's throw from the Wesleyan

Chapel which was then newly built. It was above a hundred and fifty years old, with a great garden behind stuffed full of fruit trees—his pears were the finest in the county—and another garden in front stuffed full of flowers. It was like a perfumer's shop, with its smells of lavender, rose, violet, and such things; and I have often stood at the open window and made a regular job of sniffing, thinking to myself I had best make the most of these smells whilst I had them, for I should be going back to bilge water and the aromas of boiled salt pork presently. This morning I was slow in shaving and dressing myself, for I was constantly dropping into thought, and starting out of it to find my hands idle and my eyes fixed, with a sort of mist over them, on the beaming garden below, where the flowers stood so thickly that the place was like a huge nosegay, and where the butterflies were cruising about like bits of paper blown here and there, and where the bees were boooming with the sound of deep-toned men humming the responses in church. My window was wide open, and the whole

beauty of this glorious morning came into it. "Oh, Nelly," thought I, "this is the last day we may ever spend together! Oh, Lord! to leave you, my sweet one, and these flowers, and to go and do a week's stowing in the black and rankly smelling hold of a ship, and then to sail away and perhaps be drowned—to be set wrestling and choking in the dark hollow of a big sea, and to sink down into the silence beneath, leaving of all my life nothing but a few bubbles on the surface of the water, to be probed at as a monster by the cold snouts of fish, the like of which mortal eye may never have beheld; whilst you, my darling, having prayed God to watch over and protect me, creep into your white bed, where you lie for a long hour in the quiet night thinking of me, wondering what I am doing and if my thoughts are with you, and trying to image the ship standing upright in the calm—for if it is calm with you, how, my innocent one, shall you imagine the tempest raging elsewhere? — and the pale sails motionless as clouds, with the stars gleaming among them, until your eyes close, and

your dear lips murmur my name, and your soft breast heaves gently and regularly in sleep!"

Bah! thought I, Master Will, enough of this: and I was about to quit the window, and the room too, when, very greatly to my surprise, I heard Nelly singing in the garden; and, screwing my head round the looking-glass to get a sight of her, sure enough there she was, with a big pair of scissors in her hand, cutting flowers, her head hidden in a wide straw hat.

Singing! thought I; on this day of all days! cutting flowers with a holiday air!

"Oh, a jolly sailor's life is a merry, merry life,
And a very merry man ought he to be."

Here she paused, whilst she looked around her for a suitable flower.

"When he's tired of the shore, he need only kiss
his wife,
Pick his bundle up and run away to sea.
Tol de rol."

Here she made another pause, and I could almost have persuaded myself that she knew I was listening, and wanted to

give me time to digest the meaning of her words.

“ But it’s O heigho for the merry sailor’s wife,
For a very merry, faithless man is he :
To be married to a very merry sailor all my life
Is a merry life that wouldn’t quite suit me.
Tol de rol.”

She had scarcely finished this choice song, as old Izaak Walton might say, when I heard the councillor’s daughter, Phœbe, call out to her, “ Is Will down yet, Helen ? Breakfast will be ready in a few moments.” On which Nelly made a movement ; but before she could look up at my window, I had got sternway on me, for I had no mind just then to let her know that I had been watching and listening to her.

“ Will, are you in your room ? ” she called out ; but I gave her no answer.

I could not understand her singing and picking flowers and going about with her happy airs that morning. Though it might be all forced, it was still no good ; for I was miserable enough myself, and felt that she ought to be more miserable than I. She struck up again in a minute, but this

time more faintly ; and, being now dressed, I went downstairs.

Phœbe Johnson was in the breakfast-room, playing with a kitten in the sunshine that lay upon the carpet, and that streamed in through the open glass door or French window which led into the garden where Nelly was picking flowers. The councillor had not yet made his appearance. Phœbe was a broad-backed, deep-bosomed woman about thirty years old, with a pretty face and red hair. She did as much for her father as three generations of women could have done ; she was not only his daughter, but she quarrelled with him as viciously as if she had been his wife, and molly-coddled him as if she had been his mother, and corrected him to his face and boasted about him behind his back as if she had been his grandmother. I used to be rather fond of kissing this girl when I first knew her, and I think she liked it, and there was a time when I believed I was in love with her ; but I ceased to have any nonsense with her after I met Nelly, and she let me go with as little concern as she

would a cat that sprung from her lap after she had been nursing it a bit.

"Good morning, Phib," said I, for that was my name for her. "I'm glad to think that Nelly can sing this morning. For my part, I feel as sorrowful as a bear floating out to sea on a piece of ice." As I said this, I glanced in the direction of my sweetheart, who had gone some little distance away, and was at work with her scissors over a bed of mignonette.

"And why shouldn't she sing, my sweetest William?" replied Phœbe, with an air of exasperating indifference. "The longer she can carry her cheerfulness the shorter time she will have to fret over your absence, my dear."

"True," said I; "but still, this is my last morning but one. Half an hour later to-morrow morning I shall be saying good-bye, outward bound, my darling, a whole year and more away; and though I am glad to hear her singing," said I, scowling in my effort to keep to windward of my vexation and wonder, "yet I can't help thinking it would be more natural—I am

speaking of her as my sweetheart, ducky—if she showed the same sort of colours I'm flying. I don't want her to cry—to pipe her eye, Phib, but—— Not a word more, if you please. Here she comes."

Phib laughed, and pitched the kitten on to a sofa and went to the other end of the room as Nelly came in. Her hat, which was as big as a plantation-overseer's, kept me clear of her face when I stepped up to her, though I never made any scruple of kissing her morning and night before Phib and her father. She put the flowers upon the table and took off her hat, looking at me wistfully, as though she guessed some of my thoughts.

She was a woman, I think, every man would have admired; of the right height, her figure a graceful and beautiful one, and so active, strong, and lovely in its movements that, I used to tell her, with a little training, she would be a match for the most expert of the theatrical flying women—the people who walk on ropes and hang by their eyelids to ceilings. She had magnificent hair, "an excellent thing in woman,"

a sort of bronzed-brown (to give you some notion of it); and I never knew how much she had of it before one morning when I accidentally plumped up against her as she was crossing from her own to Phib's bedroom, with her hair all loose and covering her like a sea-wave. She plunged away from me under it with a glorious free movement, but shut Phib's door so quickly upon herself that the hind part of her hair, streaming out as she ran, got jammed, and I had to open the door to free her. Many people thought Phib's face prettier than Nelly's, but they were all women who thought so, and women are never honest in opinions of this kind; any way, I liked my own taste best. Her grey eyes and low forehead and little ears, with a lovely curve down the cheek to a throat as soft and white as the breast of a rabbit, were things I have never yet seen matched; and though her mouth might have been a wee bit large, it was full of little white teeth, and every kiss—— But this is parish talk.

“ Will doesn't like to hear you singing, my dear,” sung out Phib, quietly. “ Men

never know what they ought to like, do they, Nelly?"

Well, thought I, that's the truth, anyhow. But neither Nelly nor I appeared to take notice of the remark; she smiled a little, and looked at me quickly—indeed, her manner was altogether puzzling.

The old councillor now came in, and we sat down to breakfast. He was a dried-up old man, with a dusty face, and he wore a white hat all the year round, as well as coloured linen; so he had other pretensions to local fame than those which grew out of his town-councillorship and his acidulated letters to the papers. He was generally garrulous at meal-times, and between him and his daughter the stiffest arguments would rage; for I have noticed that your people who are pretty well agreed are always the fiercest argufiers. This morning, however, the councillor was unusually silent; I believe my going had something to do with it. Phib asked me what made *me* so dull—a mere excuse to tell her father that I had been annoyed to hear Nell singing in the garden.

"Look here, my dear," said I, "enough's as good as a feast. Don't you overtalk yourself sometimes? Perhaps I am fretting because I have to leave you."

"You were once sweethearts, weren't you?" said Nelly, demurely.

"Would you like to take me with you, Will?" asked Phib. "What would you do with me on board a ship?"

"Perhaps make a figure-head of you," I answered: "and very fine you'd look."

"You have made up your mind not to run down and see us before you sail, Will?" said the councillor.

"Why, Mr. Johnson, I think it's best to make one good-bye do for all. Handshaking and God-bless-you-ing is no joke to a fellow when he's leaving what he loves—perhaps for ever," said I, feeling a lump in my throat. Here Nelly put a spoon into her cup and peered into it close.

"I hope we *shall* meet again, my boy," said the old man, gloomily; "though a year is a longer time for me to look ahead than it is for you, who have nearly forty years to serve to come to my age. And though you

are going to sea, which is reckoned by us people ashore but a perilous life at the best, I don't suppose there's a man living who would not bet heavily on the chances of your coming back to look at the old place once more, as against the chances of my being alive to welcome you."

He seemed really affected, and Phib was now looking as grave as a nun at her prayers. Nell, with her cheek in her hand —like a peach in the cup of a lily—gazed at the old councillor wistfully: there *was* a tear in her eye, but it was as puzzling to me as all the rest of her conduct, for she seemed to be thinking more of Mr. Johnson than of me—if, indeed, she was thinking of me at all.

But my story does not lie at this breakfast-table, nor in Councillor Johnson's house. So let me clap on a bit of extra canvas and claw off this shore, for I am afraid I'm too much of a sailor to feel happy in land-togs, and the sooner I can get you to sea the more comfortable I shall feel.

Nelly did not sing again that day—at least, I didn't catch her singing; but neither

during the morning nor in the afternoon did she give me half as much of her company as I wanted. She seemed to have made a lover of old Johnson, for she kept on making excuses to be with him, and her manner to him was so gentle and loving and sad, that I never saw the like of it before in her. It was too hot all that day to leave the house, but when the sun was low, and the hush and softness of the early evening had fallen, I asked Nelly to come with me for a row on the river, "for the last time," and without a word she went for her hat, passed her hand through my arm, and we walked slowly down the lanes to the old boat-house.

The last impression a man takes of his home before he goes on a long journey is nearly always the one that lives, and that comes to him in intervals of silence and thought when he is far away. Many a time since, in the lonely night-watches at sea, has this town of Burmarsh and the country around it, as they appeared that evening under the long crimson lines flowing from the west, whilst in the east loomed a bank of slate-

coloured clouds with golden outlines, against which the delicate rose-tinted hills stood out, arisen before my eyes with something more than the vividness of memory. I have been ashore in many lands and seen nature in many shapes of beauty, but I have never beheld anything comparable to an English country scene on a summer evening, just when the sun has waxed low enough to let one or two large stars shine forth, and when the green of the trees grows dark against the deepening blue of the sky, and when the pelting day-chorus of the birds is over and only a few melodious notes speak here and there, and when the brown frog comes out from under the hedge and leaps athwart the dust of the road, and when little shrill twitterings arise from the grass around, whilst the arms of the windmill are at rest, and only the top windows of the higher houses are aflame with the sunset, and the gathering of the peace of the night is beheld like a presence in the east and can almost be watched, so to say, coming along with the shadows.

There were a couple of boats lying along-

side the banks of the river. We got into one of them, and the man that owned her cast us adrift, and I rowed for about half a mile, until we were well in the country away from the town, when I threw one oar inboard, and took the other aft with which I steered the boat, through the aftermost rowlock, with a light movement of my wrist almost unnoticed by myself. By this means I kept the boat in mid-stream, and we drifted down with the current, which ran here at about half a mile an hour, whilst I sat close against my sweetheart in the stern-sheets.

It was a calm and beautiful evening ; the sun was gone now, but all the sky was ablaze in the west, and the moon was in the south ready to throw its light down when the crimson had faded ; the cows were lowing impatiently in the meadows, but otherwise there was a great silence abroad, and only now and again would we catch sight of a man, some village labourer, his head and shoulders visible over the tops of the corn-fields, or trudging along the road that skirted the river at a distance of a couple of hundred feet. All about here the river

lay quite open to the sky, the fields flat and the country treeless, though half an hour's steady rowing would have brought us to some lovely scenes: but the river twisted like a corkscrew, and every turn found the water of a new complexion—now a kind of lustrous ash-colour; now dark and gleaming, with the faint moon languishing in it; again, as it veered to the west, catching the blood-red light of the sky in that quarter, and then a dark blue, in imitation of the northern heaven.

We sat as sweethearts should, both together; my right arm was around her waist, and with the other hand I held the oar. She, the better to sit close to me, removed her hat, and as she often laid her head upon my shoulder, and had her ear close to my mouth, we conversed in such low voices that we should have been inaudible to any person sitting forward in the boat. The wonder that had troubled me that morning when I heard her singing, and watched her gaily picking the flowers, was gone now. She smiled when I recurred to it, and drew away from me to let me look into her eyes,

as if she preferred that I should find out the truth for myself in that mirror which she held up to me, sooner than that she should speak about it. I felt that I had made too much of her singing, though still, and even in this time, I seemed to miss in her manner something that I cannot define, but that I felt ought to be there.

Perhaps if ever I had a right to be jealous of her at all, it was then ; for in a very few hours now I should be parting from her for a long year, and such was my love, that I felt the only thing that would make our separation bearable would be the power of thinking that she was as true as a compass to me, and that I might be sure her heart and prayers were with me wherever I might be, and that, though thousands of miles divided us, she could not be more truly mine than were she my wife and by my side. Hence, if I thought of her and watched her critically on this eve of my departure, you will think me excused ; besides, who can truly love without jealousy ? what sunbeam but has its shadow ? I believe she felt that her manner was wanting, and she

tried to mend it by caresses ; but, though her sadness at times equalled mine, I felt, as I had been made to feel throughout the day, that its inspiration was not altogether owing to me. I noticed tears in her eyes when we were speaking of Phœbe and the councillor, and she owned that it made her cry to think of them.

"But why, Nelly, do you cry for *them* ? " I asked. " Is anything going to happen ? One would think that *they* were going away to sea."

"I am a silly girl, Will," she answered, drying her eyes ; and she took my hand in both hers and pressed it passionately to her breast, and immediately buried her face and sobbed bitterly for some moments. I kissed her once or twice, but let her have her cry out without offering to speak. This sorrow I felt I could claim for myself ; for the way she seized my hand made me feel that I was the object of it ; so I began to cheer her as well as I could.

"A year is a long time to look forward to, Nelly, but a short time to look back upon. It seems but yesterday that I said

good-bye to you when I went away on my last voyage."

"Yes, it will pass, Will ; and I hope God will spare us both, darling, to witness the end of it, and be together safe."

"Ay, we must hope that indeed, and pray for it too. But I shall leave you full of brave hopes. I am pretty sure of getting a chief-mate's berth next voyage, and we shall marry upon it, Nelly, and make an end of this waiting." And I talked again of the schemes we had repeated to each other, and got her to smile ; but this cheering her up was desperate hard work to me, who was the more miserable of the two, as I now know. It was like sailing two knots against a three-knot tide ; it was making headway through the water, but sternway over the ground, and I gave it up at last for fear of breaking down altogether, and chucked the oars into the rowlocks, and rowed away back to the boat-house.

We had the moon with us now, and in bends of the river the water lay in sheets of silver. The sky was full of yellow stars, and in this light the face of Nelly looked phan-

tom-like. I could scarcely remove my eyes from it ; it seemed unreal, like a memory, as if she had been here but was now gone, and her face there was only my imagination : On either hand the land loomed away in a white mist ; the dip of the oars was the only sound, unless now and again the *cheep* of the stream as it met and half-circled the trunk of some tree whose roots were beneath the water line. We exchanged but few words : my heart was too full for speech ; it gave me pain to articulate ; and Nelly sat quite still, with her gaze fixed on the water, and sometimes, when the bend of the river brought the moon broad upon her, I could see the tears sparkling in her eyes. Anon we reached the landing-stage ; I lifted her out of the boat, and we walked slowly in the direction of home.

CHAPTER II.

DOWN THE RIVER.

THE *Waldershare* was a full-rigged ship of eight hundred and fifty tons, but looked smaller than this figure of her tonnage suggests. She had been built and originally owned in Aberdeen, but her owner having joined the firm to which the *Waldershare* now belonged, he had brought his ship with him, and the word "London" was painted on her stern. The Scotch are the best shipbuilders in the world, and the *Waldershare* was always admired as a beautiful specimen of the skill of their yards. When I first saw her she was in dock, lying close against the wall, her decks forward covered with raffle, and a litter of dirt and goods amidships. The ships ahead and astern of her also

helped to muddle her lines ; and yet she looked, with only the run of her bulwarks visible, and her beautifully rounded stern, and her top-gallant forecastle narrowing like the bows of a yacht, with the same clever curve and gradual sweep which talks of speed to the eye, the handsomest vessel of her kind then in the docks, and a ship for a sailor to love as he would a sweetheart. She was coppered to the bends, and painted green fore and aft with a narrow white streak ; her stern was elliptical, and in the graceful bend of it was a broad gilt scroll, in the midst of which was written her name and that of her port in small white letters. Her figure-head was a gilt dolphin, the tail flemish-coiled, and it overhung a stem as sharp as a knife, sweeping out and around in real racing lines. She was heavily sparred—too heavily, I always thought ; her lower masts were as bright as mahogany, and the sun streaked them with fire ; her fore and main yards were huge spars, and promised an immense spread of canvas ; she carried single topsails, and reefs in the fore and main top-gallant sails, and short royal-

mast heads, which, with her heavy tops, gave her a man-of-war look. Her decks were full of brass-work—brass rail across the break of the poop, brass handrails to the poop ladders, brass stanchions for the life-ropes, brass gratings over the skylights, brass binnacles, brass belaying-pins for the mizzen rigging, and even the pump just abaft the mizzen-mast, that was used for washing the poop down, was crowned with brass, so that I reckoned, when I saw all this, the youngsters would have their hands full.

The tide serving at half-past two, we got clear of the docks at that hour on Thursday, the 26th of June, 1858. The day was a bright one and hot enough, with a fresh breeze blowing straight up the river. The ship was now in very different trim from that she had been in when I boarded her a week before. Her decks were as white as holystoning could bring them ; the brass-work just made them a broad glare of light in the brilliant sunshine ; aloft every bunt was as smooth as a pillow, all the running gear hauled taut, the standing rigging like wire, and the whole

ship a beautiful picture. A crowd of idlers cheered us as we went out, and in a few minutes the tug had got us into mid-stream, and the noble ship was gliding down the river, one of the stateliest fabrics which ever swam upon it.

Now that we were out of the docks there was little to be done ; there were two hands at the wheel, and most of the men forward on the forecastle watching the shore as it slipped past us. This going down the river is the most melancholy part of the voyage out to men who make any trouble of leaving home. The scenes which one passes are so familiar, that, as one by one they drop astern or vanish round the bends of the river, a new wrench is given to the heart. You look at the clustered houses, and at the wharves with the black old billyboys squatting alongside ; the cranes slowly rising, or dropping ponderous burdens at the end of massive chains ; at the people stopping their work to gaze at your ship as she passes by ; at the wherry bobbing in the swell left by the paddles of the tug, with its solitary occupant who drops his breast upon his oars to

remove his hat and wave it; at the green fields away over the slimy river-banks and the dim country beyond them; and if sorrow is to be felt by you at all, it will be felt now, as one by one these scenes die out in the distance, and every yard of the soil that goes past deepens the sense that good-bye has been said indeed, and that England—the old beloved home—will soon be behind the great ocean towards which your brave ship is steering.

And yet, on such a day as this was and amid such a scene, the most despondent mind must have found something in the general freshness and beauty to lift it up. The river was unusually full of all sorts and descriptions of vessels. Now a huge screw, with her bows as tall as a hill and her propeller half out of the water, churning up a little mountain of foam, would pass us; then it would be a ship in tow, going up the river, deep in the water, her sides worn with the struggles of a long voyage, her sails clumsily furled, her anchors rusty, and her crew with their heads over the bulwarks pointing out the places ashore; or a crazy

old collier squelching along under squared yards, with her greasy sails fitting her as prettily as a boy's clothes would a man—a red nightcap at the galley door, a grinning boy, with his face as black as a nigger's, astride of the jibboom, and a man at the crazy little wheel, looking first up and then down, and up and down again, and so on, up and down, as though he were a machine with all the works in his neck. Or a fast steamer, bound for some French, or Irish, or north-country port would pass us, the skipper on the bridge, a crowd of passengers aft, who would stare at us through glasses and sometimes wave a hat or a handkerchief. When we were abreast of Greenwich, a Gravesend pleasure-boat came up with us hand over fist, densely crowded with passengers, and a band of music on a sort of midship platform. The captain of her wishing, I suppose, to give his patrons the benefit of all the sights which came in his way, sheered his vessel to port, which brought her rather alarmingly close to us; so much so that I thought he would have been into us, and sprang aft to tell him to mind his

helm ; but he steadied in time, and went seething past, the band striking up “Hearts of Oak”—a strain which our men seemed very much to relish, for they cheered the steamer and yelled out answers to her passengers ; and so the gay little vessel rushed ahead, every creature on board, even the little children, waving hat or hand or hand-kerchief : but for some moments we were nearly suffocated with the smoke from her funnels.

The grandeur of the Thames lies in its wealth of human interests ; yet as a river it is one of the noblest, and if it flowed anywhere but in England, Englishmen would never be weary of praising it. I had passed up and down it many times before, but though there was much to cloud my mind and dull the edge of enjoyment, it had never more impressed me nor filled me with greater pride than on this day. The sunshine was broad and searching, and all the various colours of the scene were extremely vivid and the contrasts very sharp. Off Woolwich seemed to me the finest part of this gay show, for just at this point a great

number of passing vessels came by chance together, and the river was covered by a whole fleet of ships big and little, amid which some steamers plied cautiously, sometimes backing and then forging ahead, whilst from one vessel to another shouts were re-echoed, and yards were boxed about and the men went springing here and there like kangaroos. The breeze was very fresh and the water rough with it, and the dance of the sun in the river was almost blinding ; the little vessels upward bound had it all their own way, and pushed along with a heap of snow at their fore feet ; but there was a number of colliers, hoys, barges, and vessels of that kind beating down, and as they ratched from shore to shore, slueing on their heels to run athwart the wind on another tack, it looked like a quadrille or country-dance of ships, and there was quite as much dignity and stateliness and bowing as the vessels filled and bent over as was wanted to furnish out the image. Shortly after we had passed Greenhithe, a crazy old brig, with a boom foresail and stump top-gallant masts, and sails as full of holes as

a beggar's professional suit, came swirling around and plumped into a taut little barque that was beating cautiously down under topsails. The collision hove the barque up into the wind, the brig came round, and in a minute there they lay locked, as if they had got grapping-irons on board one another, grinding against each other's side, resembling two alley wenches grabbing at each other's hair and pounding with their fists. The brig's jibboom snapped off as though it had been a carrot; then after some wild buckling down came the slender fore top-gallant mast of the barque with all its hamper of sails and gear; immediately after the two old-fashioned starboard channels of the brig were ground off as neatly as the top of an egg sliced by a knife, and there the vessels lay, a couple of wrecks. By this time we had come abreast of them, and the confusion on their decks was something to remember. Some of the men were rolling about like casks over the raffle; others had shrunk right aft to be clear of the spars which were tumbling forward; the swearing and fist-shaking were triumphs of maritime

art in this particular branch of the profession. However, the damage done was nearly all aloft, the barque being the worst sufferer, and already there was a small fleet of boats putting off, whilst a tug steered straight for the unfortunate vessels, so that what we had seen was evidently the worst of a bad job.

It was generally understood that we were to bring up off Gravesend in order to ship a few passengers. When Gravesend hove in sight orders were given to see the chain cable all clear for running, and when we were abreast of the town the tug let fall our tow-rope, and after we had swum a few minutes the anchor was let go, the cable roared through the hawse-hole, and the ship swung with her stern down the river. So here we were holding on tight again to English ground.

The captain went ashore, the river pilot and the custom-house officers going along with him, and the ship was left in the charge of the chief officer. The decks were soon cleared, everything made snug and ready, an anchor watch set, and the hands

went below. My share of the work being done, I came aft, where I found the chief mate — a little red-haired Welshman, Thomas by name, the smallest man I was ever shipmates with. When I had first seen him I could scarcely keep from laughing, for his dress was as odd as his body was little: consisting of very wide blue cloth trousers, which held the wind as the skin of a sausage holds its meat, and made his legs look like bolsters; brown velvet waistcoat with gilt buttons, over which lay the bight of a stout gold chain; a red silk handkerchief with fly-away ends, which were always over his shoulders; blue linen, and a cloth cap with a broad peak, along the scuppers of which was rove half a foot of gold lace. He had little quick blue eyes, which played in their sockets like a ball on the top of a jet of water, a bush of red hair under his chin, and long red eyebrows which he could have soaped into points, had he chosen, as a Frenchman does his moustache. He was a regular little nautical dandy, but by this time I had got used to his rig and appearance and was well dis-

posed to like him, for I could see that he had immediately taken a fancy to me, and though I had not as yet had any opportunity of judging him as a seaman, I had found him very smart and sensible in dock. He told me he had a captain's certificate, but could not get a berth; this was his second voyage as chief mate of the *Waldershare*, but his first with Captain Flanders, the man who now commanded her.

I found him gazing gloomily at the shore, in which occupation I was quite ready to join him. Now that the bustle of bringing up was over, and the ship at rest, and the shifting interests of the river gone, my heart fell heavy in me again, and my thoughts went away to Burmarsh, and Nelly, and the happy, loving hours I had spent and which were now over. Mr. Thomas was sitting on the aftermost skylight, his little feet well above the deck, and was rubbing his nose down with a sad look on his little face.

"Well, Mr. Lee, here we are, sir," he said; "old England broad on both beams, though the old hooker ought to be going

the road she's pointing to to please me. I hope it may be well with us all, Mr. Lee; though, damme, sir, no man could have the cheek to pray for a better ship under him than the *Waldershare*; I never heard of such a run as she has. Follow the curve of her to the eyes, sir: she's like a dream, something too fine for mortal hands." He pointed forward with his chin, like a negro, still rubbing his nose.

"Ay, she's a beauty, Mr. Thomas; but, as you say, she's bound the wrong way, and lovely as she is, I'd rather be aboard of that old *Geordie* there who's making a fair wind of it home."

"And so would I, Mr. Lee—more than you, perhaps; for I dare say your hankering is only after a few knockabout pleasures. But I'm leaving a wife, and a wife is a solemn thing to leave for a spell, long or short."

"I am with you there, sir," said I, with a warmth that made him lift his eyes to my face.

"Why, are *you* married?" he inquired. I told him I was not, but that I was as

good as married, for that my sweetheart and I were pledged to each other, and that if she was not yet my wife in the law, she was so in my love, and that parting from her this time was the cruellest necessity that had ever been forced upon me since I was old enough to recollect.

He listened attentively, rubbing his nose all the time, and then exclaimed, "Well, I suppose I'm not the only man who has to leave his wife. I dare say, now, there are a dozen fellows forward who are leaving wives, and children too. I've only been married a month, and marriage when it's fresh is like a new cement, that makes the pieces united pretty hard to come apart, though in time, faith, they'll fall of themselves." He coughed dryly, and burying his hands in his pockets, said, "But I've left her snug enough, in three good rooms with brand-new furniture, and all my savings ever since I went to sea, in her name at the bank. She has her sister to keep her company, and as time flies more quickly than people reckon who count forrards, I don't know that there is much to blubber over."

So saying, he jerked himself on to the deck as though he had done with that subject. I spoke to him about Captain Flanders, and asked if he knew anything about him.

"Not very much," he answered. "Only I can tell you what an old shipmate of mine told me when he heard that Captain Flanders was appointed to the *Waldershare*—though, mind, I don't believe it—that there's madness in his family on his father's side; that his father hung himself; and one of his brothers, who was in the Church, used to make nothing of changing his clothes with a beggar in the public street in broad daylight, shifting himself down to his very breeks, and that he dropped preaching at last because he thought the devil always got into the pulpit with him: but what became of him my friend didn't tell me. I can't say whether there's much religion in the skipper or not. He has a rather monkish eye. I hear he got command of this ship through the influence of the gentleman to whom she originally belonged. It should have been my post by rights," he said, bitterly, beginning to pace the deck.

We stumped the length of the poop together for a half-hour, talking on the prospects of the voyage, the time it would take us, our several experiences of doubling the Horn, Callao (to which port we were bound direct), and so forth. By this time most of the men had come on deck again, and were clustered on the forecastle. I believe the size of the chief mate amused them, for I caught them looking our way pretty often, with a broad grin; but Mr. Thomas took no notice—indeed, in all the time I was thrown with him I never discovered that he had the least sense of his smallness, or fancied himself other than of a stout and prepossessing figure. My own height was not above five feet nine, yet I felt myself a giant alongside of him; and for every stride of mine he had to take four, so that his little feet, cased in varnished leather boots, regularly twinkled as we walked. However, in this half-hour we greatly improved our good opinion of one another; I found him an honest, simple, manly little fellow, with clear, sharp views and a brisk capacity of words, candid to

excess, and a man who had been to sea a long while and sailed in many kinds of ships. This was a very good beginning. To be associated with a mate I could like, and who was evidently willing to leave it to me to distinguish and appreciate the difference between our relative posts, was a great gain to me; and if the skipper was only half as good a fellow as his chief mate, the voyage would be a comfortable one, so far as the work aft was concerned.

Our crew was a large one for a ship of the size of the *Waldershare*, even in those days when a ship's complement was assessed on a very different scale from that we now hear of. We had thirty-three able and ordinary seamen, including a boatswain and two mates; and six idlers, consisting of a steward, cook, cook's mate, carpenter, carpenter's mate, and butcher: so that a cry of "all hands" would fill the decks with thirty-nine hands, whereof five only were boys, and this without counting the mates. However, it afterwards turned out that no less than nine of the hands were what are called "shilling a monthers;" that is, men

who had shipped merely for the voyage out for the nominal pay of a shilling a month ; so, unless we took in more hands at Callao, our working strength on the homeward voyage would not equal what it was now. As it was, we had a very tolerable ship's company, and I might hope that even in a sudden gale a great deal was to be done with the watch on deck.

Such of the crew as were visible looked promising enough, as they sat smoking on the forecastle or leant upon the rail, gazing at the shore or the ships which lay at anchor near us. They were, of course, a mixed body, and the negro, conspicuous with his red shirt, broad grin, and bland eyes, was not wanting among them, you may be sure ; there were also several Danes, Norwegians, and Americans—these latter very active rascals—and two or three south-countrymen, Italianos, and a sprinkling of black-browed scowbanks from Mediterranean ports ; but the English preponderated, and on the whole we had a good and plentiful crew.

Our cargo consisted chiefly of hardware,

railway metals, brass, iron, and other metal goods ; a heavy cargo, which might give the ship a little too much stability by making her too deep. The *Waldershire* was not a passenger ship, that is, a liner ; but she had accommodation for a dozen cuddy passengers, and three of her cabins were let and the luggage of the people in them, and the people were to be on board next day. I did not know who the passengers were, nor their names, but Mr. Thomas said that two of them were women. I told him I regretted that there were any passengers at all, as they generally gave a good deal of trouble, were always about, and were a kind of hindrance to the freedom of the cuddy. Mr. Thomas agreed with me, though, as a sea dandy, I dare say he was not sorry in his heart that there were to be women among us to admire his little feet and pretty clothes.

The weather still held beautifully fine, with as rich a coloured sky overhead as ever I had seen in the tropics or in the Pacific. The chief mate and I dined alone; the captain was still ashore, and there was

some doubt whether he would come aboard again that night. The *Waldershare's* cuddy was a short one, and extended but a few feet before the mizzen-mast; but what there was of it was very handsome: all the panelling painted white, with gold lines; the mizzen-mast that pierced it, and to which one end of the table was affixed, wreathed about with carved oak foliage, and the whole place looking more like a little drawing-room than a ship's cabin. My berth was on the starboard side, just under the poop ladder, and the window of it looked on to the quarter-deck; Mr. Thomas's was the corresponding cabin on the port side; the captain's berth was right aft, under the wheel; and between, on either hand, were the passenger's cabins and the steward's pantry.

After dinner I went on deck again, carrying my pipe with me, and left Mr. Thomas below. I was not sorry to be quit of him for a spell; he had more to say about his wife and home arrangements than interested me, and I wanted to think over what I was leaving, and to be alone for a

bit. I perched myself on a hencoop, and lighted my pipe and looked around me.

The wind had dropped, and the current had swung the ship with her head up the river. The sun was setting over the port bow, and Gravesend lay red in its light, the windows burning, and the whole town looked massive and heavy in the glow which magnified it. This red light was on the river too, veining the masts of the vessels at anchor with lances of fire, and filling the air with a purple haze, amid which every rope glanced with the glint of a spider's web, while the canvas lay upon the black yards as though a storm of snow had fallen and lined them ; and the brass-work was filled with ruby-coloured stars ; and the glass in the port-holes notched cones of quivering light in the running water, that grew dark as it swept broadening down the river, and gradually glassing its surface as the wind grew fainter with the sinking of the sun, until there was not a breath of air perceptible even to the moistened finger ; and the sounds from the shore came floating through the motionless atmosphere with

a muffled tone, with the rattle of a winch on board a near ship, or the wail of a concertina, and the gurgling of the tide as it chattered round the rudder just under me, and went twisting in little holes away, giving to the eye the idea that we were moving

There was a large American ship at anchor about three cables' length abreast of us; a big, black, soft-wood built ship, with skysail yards crossed, and long, slender whips of masts stayed aft. When the moon threw down her light, this vessel grew into a very solemn object—looming, dark, soundless, with her mastheads searching the stars. I was looking at her, and wondering where her crew was stowed away, as I had never once noticed a human being aboard of her, when I suddenly saw a pale object fall from her forecastle, whiz down her huge black bow, and strike the water with a loud splash. There is a kind of *softness* in the splash of a human body upon the water which never deceives the ear that has once heard it, and I sprang to my feet to give the alarm: but before

I could sing out, a powerful voice on board the American shouted, "Man overboard!" And then might have been witnessed a sample of Yankee smartness. In an instant half a dozen lights flashed about her, a swarm of men bounded aft, the port quarter-boat with four hands in her dropped from the davits, the blocks squealed as the falls were overhauled, and then followed the regular grind of oars in thole pins; in a few seconds the boat was some distance astern of the ship. The whole business had not occupied three minutes, and no job was ever more smartly rushed on board a man-of-war. I awaited the result with breathless expectation. Brilliant as the moonlight was, it only enabled me to discern the outline of the boat on the dark water; I could see her dodging here and there, sometimes stationary, but gradually receding further and further, until she must have wandered out of ear-shot, for twice a strong nasal voice hailed her, but no answer came back. After twenty minutes, I made out the boat pulling up the river: she came sweeping along, the moonlight glittering in

the foam under her, and some one on board the American sang out—

“Have you got him?”

“No, sir: we can’t see him anywhere! He has sunk, for we followed dead in his wake, and we must have seen him had he been afloat.”

They got the boat alongside, hooked on the falls, in a few seconds the boat hung at the davits again, and the great ship loomed black and silent. Such is the life of a sailor! He drops into a nameless grave, and no one knows whose child he is, or if there is ever a heart that will ache over his long absence.

This little incident depressed me greatly, and to rally myself I took several turns along the poop. Our own ship lay like a vision on the breathless surface of the noble river. The moon was now asserting her full power, and had flung a haze on the air, and everything looked unreal and unsubstantial in it. Occasionally a steamer would pass; but long before she hove in sight, you might hear the throb of her engines like the pulse of a running giant.

Her coloured lights brightening upon the dark water, the smoke pouring along the stars, the water crackling under her stem like rotten brushwood under the foot, her illuminated port-holes giving her the look of a marine monster full of eyes, the dusky figures upon her bridge, the *scoop*, *scoop* of the screw, or the rhythmic beat of the paddles, were all incidents of one of those spectacles of which no familiarity can moderate the beauty. Or presently oozing out of the further darkness would drift a barge with sails as motionless as carven wood, her skipper resolute to "hold on all" with the tide and take as much headway as he could get out of that sort of navigation; she would float through the gloom like a phantom until she reached the belt of moonlight on the water, when what was black of her would turn a deep indigo, and what was white silver, and so she would pass away. Gravesend was a galaxy of lights, but the shores on either side of it and across the river stretched away silent and pale, and the moan and fret of the current under the counter made the imagina-

tion find the flat and ashen land very desolate and sad-looking. There were voices singing in some of the ships around us, and here a fiddle was scraping and there a concertina tuning up: our own ship and the big black Yankee next us were the only silent ones, but our being outward bound would account for the quietness of the men. Many of them still hung about the forecastle, and some few talked in low voices in the waist; a light in the boatswain's berth on the port side of the forecastle streamed across the deck, and illuminated the lower part of the foremast, and threw into relief the huge spare booms piled atop of the long boat and the range of chain cable and coils of running rigging; but on either side this light the darkness was profound, for the high bulwark intercepted the moonlight and threw a deep shadow.

All this while, though my eye noticed the matters I have here set down, my mind was running on my sweetheart, and at one time so heavy a fit of depression came over me that I could scarcely contain myself,

and was almost thankful when Mr. Thomas came on deck and joined me, as his presence obliged me to act a part, and so I gradually rallied. We lingered on deck until the steward came to say that the grog was on the cuddy table, after which I went the rounds of the ship to see that all was right, and then turned in.

CHAPTER III.

A FOG IN THE ENGLISH CHANNEL.

NEXT morning was fine, with a strong northwesterly wind, which, however, did not promise to last. The captain was on deck when I turned out, and I heard that he had come on board late the preceding night. There was nothing to be done until we had shipped our passengers and the tug was alongside. All the ships which had been anchored near us last night were gone, and the river was full of vessels making the most of this stout breeze, and sweeping past us in processions. I breakfasted with the captain and Mr. Thomas at half-past eight, and this was the first time I had sat at table with Captain Flanders. After what the chief mate had told me, I took some interest in watching him, the better

to form an opinion for myself, and learn, if I could, from his face and talk something of his character, that I might have my cue. He was certainly a very odd-looking man, with a long face and peaked forehead, his head, indeed, as nearly resembling an egg as anything could well be; large, dark, gloomy eyes, sunk deep in their sockets, and overhung with coarse iron-grey eyebrows; his nose was a handsome one, an aquiline, and it made him look like a lord, it gave him a fine patrician air; he had no hair on his face; his lips were thin and pale; he was taller than I, but without breadth, and by the fling of his trousers as he walked and the cut of his wrists, I guessed he was little more than a skeleton. Nature had exhausted herself in producing his nose. He had been to sea all his life, but never was there a man who looked less like a sailor than he. Indeed, he had the air of a lawyer; I say a lawyer, but any calling would do that kept a man out of the sun, and shut him up with papers and cobwebs and smoke for twelve hours in every day.

He was civil enough to us both, talked of the voyage, the trim of the ship, asked questions of Mr. Thomas about her qualities, and told us about the passengers; that one was an invalid lady bent on doubling the Horn, to see what that would do for her; that the others were a Spanish merchant and his wife, who was an Englishwoman; and the fourth a Scotch engineer, who had got some railway job to carry out at Lima. On this occasion I cannot say that I noticed anything odd in his manner; he talked like a gentleman—I mean he used good words, and delivered them with that clean, easy articulation which the best education—so I have noticed—will not qualify a man of inferior birth to arrive at. His dress was strictly a landsman's: cutaway coat, old-fashioned stock and pin, and tall hat. So far all seemed well with him; and as he came from a religious stock, and gave himself no sea-airs, I might suppose he would give the crew only good words.

A little before one the tug came alongside, and the news went along that the passengers were coming off the shore with

the pilot. The order was now given to man the windlass. All hands tailed on, and the clank of the windlass was like the sound of a giant's hammer on a forge ; and this was the only sound, until suddenly a hoarse voice broke into a song, and there sprang out of thirty throats a hurricane-chorus that might have awakened the echoes of the distant hills. Then followed a number of orders in rapid succession : "Get the outer jib loosed ready for hoisting ! " "A hand aft here to the wheel ! " "Look out there for that line from the tug ! " "Bring the gangway steps along here and bear a hand ! " The end of a line cleverly flung from the tug pitched on to the forecastle ; the ponderous tow-rope was bent on to it and paid out overboard. There was a little crowd of persons round the gangway to receive the passengers, and hand up what odds and ends of parcels and luggage they had brought off with them ; but having gone forward just then, and happening to stand in the very eyes of the ship, I could see but little of what was doing on the quarter-deck, and scarcely

caught a glimpse of Captain Flanders leading a thickly veiled lady into the cuddy, followed by another lady leaning on the arm of a gentleman, behind whom stalked the fourth and last passenger.

The pilot was now on the forecastle—a short, thick-set man, in a rough coat that reached below his knees, a fur cap, and a white wool shawl round his throat.

“Are you all ready?” he bawled through his hands to the tug.

“Ay, ay!”

“Man the windlass. Get your anchor up smartly, my lads!”

Once more the windlass clanked heavily and quickly, and a loud chorus broke forth.

“The anchor’s off the ground, sir!”

“Starboard your helm!”

The paddles of the tug revolved, and ran a sluice of white water against the bows of the ship; the bight of the tow-rope lifted, and the huge warp stiffened; and with the windless clanking, and the men raising their echoing chorus, and the Union Jack at the peak and the house-flag at the main standing out like boards, the *Waldershare* glided through the water.

The fresh breeze was something to make the most of. All the fore and aft canvas was set, the yards braced up, and we went racing after the tug, catching the broad surface of foam she threw off full on our bows, and spreading it far out on either side of us. If the breeze only held, and the *Waldershare* had the sailing qualities she looked to have, we might hope to have given the English Channel our heels by Saturday morning; but already the blue of the sky was growing weak, losing its rich tone, and something of the bite was taken out of the sunshine. This looked as if the breeze was to slacken.

Everything was now snug forward, the anchor catted and fished, and the decks clear. I went to the forecastle to give the pilot a message, and when I returned I found three of the passengers on deck talking to the captain, who, the pilot having charge, had nothing to do but walk, eat, and sleep as it pleased him.

The Spanish merchant, whose name was Espinosa, was a complete scarecrow of a man, with a hollow, gaunt, and sallow face,

out of which stuck an immense hooked nose. His hair hung in ringlets about his ears, but all the lower part of his face, together with his mouth, were bushed up with a beard and moustache as black as ebony. His fingers were covered with rings, and every ring had a brilliant, and every time he moved his hands in the sunshine they flashed like the blade of a sword. His wife was a fat blonde, with a very pale, docile face; not pretty, and yet not unpleasing. I supposed she was forty by the cut of her hull, but she was dressed like a girl of eighteen, in a smart hat and long feather, and a tight-fitting jacket that developed her run with alarming accuracy. She, too, was richly figged out with jewellery, and the gold chain round her neck was thick enough to have served as ground tackle for a thirty-ton cutter. The Scotch engineer, Mr. Black, was a broad-faced, freckled man with pale-blue eyes, but no other facial distinguishments that I can remember. You could smell the snuff on him six fathoms off when he was to windward.

They all stood together aft, Madam Espinosa (as I called her) apparently very much delighted with the scene, and her husband gesticulating like a windmill.

We were now clear of the Lower Hope Reach, and heading a good east, with Thames Haven sloping past us gaily, and all to starboard the flat, desolate stretches of mud, called marshes, to which no sunshine could furnish any sort of attraction. I know what South African river mud is, and I know what Irish mud is, and I have also seen some pretty mud up the Peiho river; but for its consistence, colour, adhesiveness, and unmitigated offensiveness in all and every respect, there is nothing that ever I have seen to equal Thames mud, and particularly the mud that lines the south side of the river, off the reaches through which the *Waldershare* was now towing.

As I had expected, the breeze dropped as the sun declined, and before we were abreast of Sheerness, all the air I could feel was caused by the motion of the ship. The water became a speckless, burnished surface, and the motionless sailing vessels

which we passed were reflected in it line for line. Calm it was indeed, for now we were literally breasting the waters of the German Ocean; yet the swell that seems to haunt every sea in its repose—the placid breathing, so to speak, of the sleeping monster—was wanting here; and our flying jibboom end never lifted nor sank an inch above or below the point of the horizon towards which it curved. But already the horizon was as thick as mud, and before Sheppey was astern of us we were raising on the port bow, a long, low, defined white line, with sinuous arms, like twisted columns, forking out of it into the unwholesome blue.

Where the air came from to move this curtain of vapour I could not guess; but it was unrolling itself—just as you might run a roll of carpet along the floor—down away to the south, and it left all behind it, as it went, as thick as a feather bed. It was curious to see it swallow up the vessels it met as it pushed its way forwards. Up to the very moment of contact there would be some craft—say a little

fore and aft schooner—as clean to the eye as a black and white drawing, with her white sails gleaming in the water like the wings of an albatross, and the sunshine broad upon her; then pouff! she would vanish as you extinguish an image in a soap-bubble by touching it; and meanwhile the horizon grew narrower and narrower as the tug went on towing us towards this moving continent of vapour.

The pilot kept a look-out ahead from the forecastle.

"I suppose he'll bring up when he gets into that business," I said to Mr. Thomas.

"Well, he's got a clear enough course round the North Foreland," he answered. "He may hold on until he nears the Goodwin unless it clears."

The sun was still shining on us, and the contrast of the fog ahead and the clear weather around us and astern was striking enough. We had long before let go the staysail halliards, and were now towing with square yards. All of a sudden I noticed the water darkening in the westward, and in about ten minutes a light

breeze was blowing along the decks over our stern. The fog which stood awaiting us like a wall began to travel under this pressure, and something resembling the phenomenon of a ship advancing upon a fog, and a fog receding before a ship, was now exhibited.

"We shall get it all the same," said Mr. Thomas ; "sooner or later, and sooner than later, hang it!"

The truth is, the English Channel is one of those places every sailor is glad to get quit of ; nothing sets sailors growling more than having to handle their ground tackle when once the anchor is at the cathead. A fog makes a regular hornet's nest of a ship ; it is all groping and blind staring, and you are never sure that the next moment will not bring the iron bow of a steamer grinding into you. However, for the present the fog was journeying our way and making a stern chase of it, and so we might hope to round the Foreland in the sunshine, though we should find the fog waiting for us behind it.

A night-glass belonging to me was in my

cabin, and I went below to fetch it, thinking I might put it to some account presently. Everybody belonging aft was on deck, as I believed ; and being thirsty, I went along the cuddy to the steward's pantry, which was a small cabin abreast of the companion steps, for a glass of sherry and water. The steward was on deck. I entered the pantry, found what I wanted, and was in the act of returning, when the door of the cabin immediately opposite was opened, and there stood Helen Williams.

I stared at her, doubting my senses ; my heart seemed to stop beating ; I turned pale and stood as one thunderstruck ; I clutched hold of the cuddy table, for the sudden great surprise made me feel sick ; my head swam ; I stood transfixed ; I could not believe, I say, that what I saw was real. Only a moment before I had been thinking of her and our farewell to each other that day, a week gone ; and now there she stood, she whom but a moment before I believed was still at Burmarsh, and from whom only that morning I had received a letter, posted at Burmarsh, and written by her.

"My God, Nelly!" I cried: "is it you? How came you here? Great God, what a surprise!"

She ran round the table and threw her arms about me, and burst into tears.

"Oh, Will!" she cried, "I could not bear to be separated from you! A whole long year was too much to bear. Do not be angry with me, Will. Oh, Will, kiss me, dear, and tell me you are glad that I am with you."

"Glad!—angry!—why, this is a dream, surely!" I cried. "Did Mr. Johnson know of this? and Phœbe? And why did not you tell me? What has your love made you do, dear? Why, we shall be a whole year away, and how can you stand so long a voyage? Why, this is enough to drive me mad! You—alone—daring all this for me! Why have you done it, Nelly?"

Scarcely knowing what I said, and still doubting that it was all real, I drew away and grasped her hands and looked at her, until the sight of her face, and the thought of the love that had made her do this thing, overmastered me, and for some moments I durst not venture to speak.

Meanwhile she stood watching every change in my face, not daring to address me, and growing red and then white, and her hands trembled in mine. I have often thought since that my great surprise was cruel, as serving as a kind of rebuke to her for this unparalleled action; and yet when I consider that, when she broke upon me thus, I really and truly believed her to be some hundreds of miles distant, and imagined her at Burmarsh in the old house in which I had left her, and that I had then a letter in my pocket written by her but the day before, in which, it is true, she said that she trusted God would permit us to meet sooner than I had any hope of, though it would have been impossible for me to discover the least hint of her intention to follow me in that letter—I say, when I reflect upon all this, I am not surprised that her sudden apparition should have terrified me and drawn me away for a while from all sense of her courage and love which had impelled her to act in this manner.

Presently, hardly knowing what I did, I folded her to my heart, though immediately

after a fright seized me, to think of her as being alone with only me as her protector, and a terrible long sea-voyage, with all its perils, before her.

"Nelly," I exclaimed, "I must not let you take this journey. The captain can put you ashore at Deal. It is not too late, though it will be soon. It is better that you should forfeit any money you have paid than go this long voyage. I will tell the captain the truth, and ask him to land you at Deal. Why, how came you to do this, Nelly?"

"Now that I am with you I shall stop with you, Will. If you set me ashore you will break my heart," she answered, in a firm voice, though her eyes swam with tears. "I do not fear the voyage; it will be a great change. And could I be more comfortable in Mr. Johnson's house than I am here?" says she, looking around her; "and oh, Will! could you bear to part with me now?"

And saying this, she laid my hand against her cheek—an old sweet caress of hers—and kissed my hand. At this moment the

cuddy grew dark, by which I knew we had overtaken the fog, and were in it; at the same time I heard the pilot's hoarse voice hailing the tug from the forecastle.

"I shall have to leave you," said I, "to go on deck, for it would not do to be missed and found here with you," I exclaimed, the perception of a new embarrassment flashing upon me. And, indeed, already suspecting that we might have been observed through the skylight, under which we were almost directly standing, I led her to her cabin and quitted her with a kiss, but without another word.

So many different feelings distracted me, that it was fortunate there was no work for me to do when I gained the deck, or certainly it must have been thought I had taken leave of my senses. The fog had closed densely around us; there was still a little wind, but it only blew the fog athwart us, which was so thick that the tug ahead was barely visible, a mere looming shadow. She had slackened her speed, and we were now moving slowly through the water.

I found Mr. Thomas at the break of the

poop, and asked if he knew whether we were going to bring up?

"Not yet," he answered. "The pilot doesn't want that trouble, and who does? He has just sent aft to say that he believes this fog will lift presently, and that if we tow slowly there'll be no risk."

I crossed over to the starboard side of the poop, where, with one hand on a backstay, I stood buried in thought, my eyes fixed on the water, which went by quietly, and was as white as bright steel in the fog that had brought the horizon to within a biscuit's throw. I ought not to weary you with my reflections here; but I should say that my sweetheart's being in the ship made clear everything that had puzzled me, especially her seeming want of sorrow when we parted, and her tears when we spoke, that last evening when we were on the river, of Mr. Johnson and Phœbe.

I looked about me to judge whether, if I should go below again for a few minutes to talk to her, I should be missed. There was nothing to do; the captain, with the Spaniard and his wife, were walking up and down the

poop, and Mr. Black had joined the chief mate. I was bound to hear the first call, and so I went below and made my way into the cuddy, taking first a squint at the pantry to make sure the steward was not about.

The cuddy was now as dark as if the evening had closed around. I tapped on Nelly's door, and she asked who that was? On my replying, she instantly came out.

"I cannot rest until I have heard more of your story," said I; "although I ought to remain on deck. Even now your being here seems a dream, and were you to vanish as I stand talking to you I should not be half so surprised as I am at holding your dear hand and looking into your eyes."

The blood rose to her face as she answered: "I did not intend that you should know I was on board until we were out of sight of land. Phœbe told me you would be more angry than glad to see me, and so you were, dear; but I don't think you are angry now," says she, smiling. "You will not tell the captain to land me at Deal?"

"Have you really the courage to face this long voyage—and alone?"

"Not alone, Will; and whilst you are with me I shall have plenty of courage."

I could have taken her in my arms, for my very heart was fired by the look that accompanied her words.

"Will," says she, smoothing the back of my hand and keeping her face down, "as I told you, a whole year seemed such a terrible long while to be separated, that as the weeks rolled on with us at Burmarsh I felt my heart would break when the time arrived to say good-bye, and one day I made up my mind that I would go out in your ship as a passenger, so that we might be together. I told Phœbe, but she would not hear of it for some time, and threatened to tell you and her father; but at last she thought it was very natural I should wish to be with you, and she owned a year was a long time to wait, and that a sea-voyage might do me good. Besides, she felt I should be as safe with you as with her at Burmarsh. Indeed, she owned to me that if she had been alone in the world she would

have joined me, for she thought a sea-voyage a delightful thing. So, Will, I wrote in the name of Helen Maitland to the owners of the *Waldershare* in Leadenhall Street, and represented myself as an invalid, and that I had been ordered to take a sea-voyage, and asked their charge for the journey to Callao and back in the same ship, the *Waldershare*. They replied that the charge would be one hundred and fifty pounds for the double journey. I had a hundred pounds by me, and asked Mr. Johnson to advance me a hundred, which he did without any questions—I believe he thought it was for you, and I did not mind that he did, dear," says she, interrupting herself, but without a smile. "I sent the money to the ship-owners, and they wrote back to tell me that a cabin was secured for me, and that I might join the ship either in London or Gravesend. I chose Gravesend, and I dare say you can guess why."

"Then the captain knows you by the name of Miss Maitland?"

"Yes."

"And does Mr. Johnson know where you are?"

"By this time he does," she answered; "for Phœbe was to tell him when he asked for me."

"He will be very much frightened and pained, I fear."

She made no answer.

"And all this for me!" I cried, realizing the greatness of her love as I thought of her resolution, her courageous deception, her lonely journey from Burmarsh, her lonely arrival at Gravesend.

"You are no longer angry, Will?"

"No, darling; but I am deeply moved. It is an incredible act. No one would believe such a story."

"No girl would doubt it who loves her sweetheart truly," she answered in a low voice.

"Do you remember the song you sung under my window about the merry sailor's life?"

She blushed and smiled. "It was bad judgment, Will, and I am a bad actress. There was no reason why I should have tried to make you think I was light-hearted on the day before we were supposed to part."

My astonishment was past now, and other emotions had taken its place. The sense that she was with me filled me with gladness, and I was wondering now that ever I could have spoken of her landing at Deal. Besides, when I considered how many girls had undertaken sea-voyages alone, coming or going to join their parents or friends or lovers in India or Australia and other distant places, in charge only of the captains of the ships in which they sailed, I found that, outside the real reason of Nelly's voyage, there was nothing very strange in her being alone in the vessel ; and so far as I knew myself, I was at least assured that she could have no better protector in this world than the man who loved her and waited only to marry her. I was now as light-hearted as I had before been perplexed and worried, and she was very quick to notice the change in me.

"And now as to our behaviour to each other," said I. "We had best keep our secret for the present, though I think I shall make a confidant of the chief mate later on, who is a good-hearted little fellow,

as I believe, and will take a particular interest in you when he hears that you are to be my wife ; though I shall tell him that your joining as a passenger was planned between us, as that will give the whole thing a ship-shape look. As to the captain, I shall require to see more of his character before I open my mouth ; and therefore, for the present, it will be safest to keep apart as much as possible." And I went on to explain to her that my position was a subordinate one, and that the skipper might take it into his head to resent any intimacy on my part with her on board his ship, and make my berth a hot one. She grasped my whole meaning with the quickness of a woman's wit, and promised to do exactly as I bid her. I advised her for the present to play the part of an invalid, and was going on, when a footstep on the companion ladder warned me to break off, and she had just time to enter her cabin, and I to fetch the foremost end of the cuddy, when the captain made his appearance.

" Is that you, Mr. Lee ? " he sung out.

" Yes, sir."

"Where's the steward? Send him aft, will you, and tell him to light the cuddy lamps."

He then stepped up to Nelly's cabin, as she afterwards told me, and asked her if she would join Madam Espinosa on deck; and was extremely polite, waiting until she had put on her hat, and then giving her his arm, though there was little enough for her to see when she got upon deck.

I passed the word forward for the steward, and waited till he came out of the cook's galley, and then I went on to the poop again just as Nelly came through the companion with Captain Flanders. It did appear to me extraordinary that she and I should be together in the same ship, and it seemed a mere fancy to think that we should not be separated, but that the whole voyage, which I had looked forward to with so much dread because it was going to keep me away from my sweetheart for more than a year, was to be taken with her, and that I should see more of her and be more with her than if I had stayed in Burmarsh for the year. She immediately engaged Ma-

dam Espinosa in conversation, whilst the gentlemen stood round. I, of course, held to the foremost end of the poop.

The fog had somewhat thinned, to the extent that the tug, and perhaps a quarter of a mile of water beyond her, were visible. It was evident it hung low, for it was white and luminous with the sunshine that was pouring in the blue sky over it. There was not a breath of air now. The pilot had sung out to the tug to fire away again, and we were running swiftly over the water, as I might judge by the lines of green weed and the great yellow blobs of jelly-fish that went past. It was now a little before six, and we were somewhere abreast of Herne Bay, heading sharp for the Foreland, which ought to be well on the starboard quarter by eight.

At six o'clock the first dinner bell rang, and Captain Flanders and the passengers went below, Mr. Black handing Nelly to the companion with a fine elaborate flourish. Mr. Thomas likewise vanished to adorn himself, and the pilot forward and I aft kept the deck, an arrangement that answered

my purpose, as for the present the less I was thrown with Nelly in the society of the captain the better. I took a furtive squint through the skylight at the dinner-table when they were seated at it, and saw that Nelly was placed between Mr. Black and Madam Espinosa. The lamplight filled her hair with spangles, and her eyes, when she threw a glance up, though she could not have seen me, flashed like the jewels on the Spaniard's fingers. The skipper sat, with his egg-shaped head, at the head of the table as grave as a ghost, the eyes in his gaunt cheeks looking like smouldering cinders ; and little beau Thomas was at the other end, though all that I could see of him was his hair, that shone as though he had been dipped into an oil-cask. Madam Espinosa's laugh sounded gay, and Mr. Black's guffaw was brave ; but I believed we should hear different sounds when we began to feel the swell.

The only vessel we sighted hereabouts was a smack at anchor, into which the tug was heading as neatly as you aim the end of a thread into the eye of a needle. She

oozed out of the fog, her red mainsail set, and her foresail hanging in a bight over her bows, and they raised a yell on board of her when they saw us which the tug answered by a prolonged whistle. There was, however, plenty of time and plenty of room, and we gave her as wide a berth as she could want. She made a pretty picture, with her shadow full of colour hanging in the burnished water, and her men, in boots up to their thighs and cased in blue jerseys, staring at us ; she was a west-country smack, with her decks full of nets, and she faded astern of us just as the reflection of your face fades on a looking-glass on which you breathe.

The pilot's dinner was sent forward to him, and he ate it on the forecastle, making the capstan a table, and coming up to his plate and taking a mouthful, and then leaning over the rail and staring ahead, and so on. I went below at half-past seven, when the cuddy table was deserted, and got something to eat. Nelly had gone into Madam Espinosa's cabin, and so I saw nothing of her. As I came on deck I heard the pilot

roar out to the tug, "Keep a sharp look-out for the Elbow buoy," which was answered by a faint "Ay, ay."

"I shall bring up to the east'ards of the Gull buoy, abreast of the Nor' Sands Head Lightship!" he shouted.

"Right you are!" came back from the tug, and so all hands had their cue.

The tug was now towing at half-speed, for the fog had settled down very thick. A hand was in the starboard main chains with the lead which he hove at intervals, his wild cry sounding strangely as it followed the splash of the lead. Fore and aft the decks were wet with the fog, that had now taken the character of a very fine rain, and rolled among the yards in volumes, like clouds of steam. The outline of the tug was just visible ahead, and the flapping of her paddles resembled the run of heavy naked feet upon a deck.

Scarcely any experience that a sailor can pass through is more irritating and bewildering than a fog in the English Channel. Every faculty in him, sight, smell, hearing, all his instincts, his memory,

his judgment, are taxed to the utmost, and all together. We knew we should have to bring up, and could not tell but that the fog would lift the moment we had our anchor down, and then we should have to get under weigh again. All hands were as surly as scalded monkeys, and forwards the air rumbled with sea-blessings. The pilot had held on, hoping the fog would clear ; and now that it had come down as thick as an Antarctic snowfall, he had still to hold on to fetch the anchorage he wanted, that would put us somewhat out of the road of passing steamers.

However, a few minutes after eight bells there came a hail from the tug. The pilot sung back an answer ; the tow-rope was let go ; a shout was raised, “ Stand clear of the chain-cable ! ” the ring of the carpenter’s hammer rose clear and shrill, and souse ! down dropped the anchor with a vast splash, and in a few moments the ship was riding placidly, with the tug at anchor about two cables’ lengths away.

The evening had gathered now, and this, with the fog, made it desperately black all

round. We slung a powerful lamp on the forestay, and a couple of hands were stationed forward, with orders to keep their ears straining and report any sound they heard ; for, as it turned out, we had brought up slap in the fairway of vessels requiring to head an easterly course : a little to the eastward of the Gull buoy, with the light-ship stationed at the north end of the Goodwin Sands, bearing east by south ; and this was the devil's own weather for a running-down job.

The tide had swung the ship with her head pointing down Channel. How near we were to the Sands I could not imagine, as the fog had settled down so thick now that the tug had vanished, although she was near enough for us to hear the voices of the men aboard of her ; and, beheld from the poop, our riding-light merely glimmered like a glow-worm, with threads of lustre sticking into the fog like spikes of gold : but the moment the ship was silent, the creaming and seething of the tide on the Sands was as distinct as the gurgle of the water alongside.

It was to be watch and watch with me and Mr. Thomas, and I stood the first watch, while he went below to lay down in his clothes ready for the cry of "All hands!" which would certainly come the instant the weather cleared.

In the cuddy, as I might see by casting my eyes on the skylight, the captain was talking with Mr. Black, and the Spaniard and his wife were playing at backgammon or draughts, whilst Nelly watched them with her elbows on the table and her cheeks in her hands. I stood looking at her for a long while, my heart very full, and then joined the pilot and took a few turns up and down the deck with him. The fog was choking work, and he sputtered and swore over it with the true salt's trick of grumbling, from time to time thrusting his nose into the binnacle, where his mahogany face sparkled in the lamplight like a wet tarpaulin. He went below when the grog was on the table, and I watched him raise a screecher of rum to his lips, nodding politely around before he drank, and drying his mouth on the sleeve of his coat.

So I was now alone on deck. There was a deep stillness on the water; the only sound that penetrated the fog was the continuous delicate hissing of the tide running by the Sands; but this, as I say, being continuous, seemed to form a part of the silence—at all events, it appeared to heighten it. The men were below, glad to get out of the damp air, which was not rendered more tolerable by its tepid temperature. The two hands on the look-out paced the forecastle noiselessly.

Presently I sung out: “Forward there! Can you see anything of the tug?”

“No, sir.”

“Keep your ears wide open, my lads.”

“Ay, ay, sir.”

Four bells were struck,—ten o’clock. The captain came on deck, followed by the pilot, and they walked down to the break of the poop and had a few words together.

“It’s thick enough to hang your hat on,” said the pilot. “I reckon a southerly wind ’ll follow this, and I wish it ’ud come.”

“We have not the ordering of the winds,

sir, and we must be patient," returned Captain Flanders in a deep voice. His hollow tone sounded odd, and the pilot gave a grunt. Perhaps he was as puzzled as I by the philosophy of a sea captain under circumstances which might set an angel grumbling.

On a sudden one of the men forward sung out—

"Is that a ship on the starboard beam there, sir? I thought I see a lumping big shadow out there just now, but it's gone."

I ran to the rail and strained my eyes, but it was like looking into smoke. At this moment I heard a sound remarkably like the creak of a block-sheaf on a rusty pin, followed by a dull thud, as though a coil of rope had been flung down on a deck.

"Did you hear that, sir?" hailed one of the look-out men.

"Ay, ay! There is evidently a vessel somewhere near us, sir," said I, addressing the captain.

The pilot hollowed his claws and roared out, "Ship ahoy!"

We listened, and in a few moments a

sound came back to us out of the fog which sounded uncommonly like “ Well, well ! ”

“ Have you got your anchor down ? ” bawled the pilot.

To this there was no reply.

“ Ship ahoy ! ” he shouted again.

The same dull-toned answer, resembling “ Well, well ! ” came back, this time a little fainter.

“ If you haven’t brought up, let go your anchor ! ” roared the pilot, in a voice that should have been audible at Margate, “ or you’ll be ashore ! ”

“ There she is, sir ! ” was shouted from our forecastle ; and for an instant only, as the folds of the fog opened like the mouth of a purse, I caught a glimpse of a large vessel under top-gallant sails, and away beyond her twinkled the triangular lanterns of the lightship.* The fog closed, and she and the further lights disappeared.

“ Why, that fellow’s a madman ! ” exclaimed the pilot, spitting on the deck with great excitement. “ Some blasted furriner, I expects, who’s too mean to ship a pilot ;

* This vessel burns only one light now.

and there he is bound for the Nor' Sands Head as cleverly as if he was booked for half the insurance money!"

The captain turned suddenly and walked away, as if offended by the pilot's language; indeed, his movement was too suggestive for the meaning of it to be missed. The pilot looked round after him, laughed in his throat with a gargling sound, and then, asking me to "obleege" him with a pipe of tobacco, filled a black bowl from my pouch and went down on the quarter-deck, where he stood blowing large clouds under the break of the poop.

"Mr. Lee!" hailed the skipper.

I immediately went aft.

"The habit of swearing is very offensive to me," said he, in his sepulchral voice.
"I hope, sir, you are never guilty of it?"

"Why, sir, I don't think I am."

"A man who has a soul to be saved," he continued, in a voice that seemed to tremble, "should talk as if he believed that the words he is speaking are the last God will permit him to pronounce in this life."

I had nothing to say.

"I may as well tell you, Mr. Lee, while I am on the subject," he continued, "that I intend that this ship shall be a pious ship—after the primitive fashion, sir ; the fashion of the first Christians. To you, as one of my officers, I shall look for all the assistance you can render me ; and my order to you is, that you will report every man to me whom you may hear using an oath."

I touched my cap, and he walked away, going to a part of the rail that stood in the light of the cuddy lamps shining through the skylight, where he remained for some moments, with his face upturned as though he were praying.

I thought his manner extraordinary, though I own it impressed me. I mean to say that, whilst I heartily concurred in his views of profane swearing, of which I always had as great a horror as any man, and the religious discipline of the ship (though here a limit would be wanted, for two much religion repels sailors as it does shore-folks—as the south pole of a magnet repels the needle), the tone of voice in

which he addressed me, and his talk of the first Christians, and then his going away and fixing his eyes on the sky, struck me as very singular, and something to bear thinking over and watching. He came away from the rail, and taking a look at the binnacle, walked up and down the poop with his arms folded.

Meanwhile, the pilot sucked his pipe on the quarter-deck, and the tobacco smoke came up through the fog in straight lines out of his mouth, so great was the calm.

The silence all around remained unbroken, and nothing more was to be seen of the ship that had drifted past us.

It was now five bells. We carried our bell on the forecastle, and whilst one of the men was striking it, the fog thinned overhead and astern, and glistened with the radiance of the moon. Just at that moment I fancied I beheld a flash of lightning down in the south-east, a little abaft the port beam ; but immediately afterwards came the report of a gun, and, just as a hand might divide a pair of curtains, the fog in that direction disparted and rolled away on

either side, leaving a broad space of clear water with the moonlight lying bright upon it, beyond the frosty line of which was a big ship with her sails hanging in pale spaces.

"She's got what she wants!" shouted the pilot, springing on to the poop. "She's ashore, as sure as my head's on my neck!"

A spout of flame whizzed from her side, and down came the thunder of another gun.

"See! the lightship is taking up the chorus!" I cried, as a broad glare of light streamed in the fog to the eastwards of the ship, and was immediately followed by a loud concussion.

The fog was now rapidly thinning all down in the south, but wreaths of it had floated in over the space that had opened, though in the watery moonshine—for her disc was now visible, hanging wan and sickly over the vapour that was drifting landwards and thinning as it went—the ship could just be made out.

They now sent up a rocket and burned a blue light, and another gun flashed on

board the lightship. The haze all around the vessel was illuminated by the blue fire in a semi-circle, the outer edge of which was as defined as the blue in a rainbow; and the water, catching the ghastly lustre, doubled it and filled the eye with a complete circle of phosphorescent radiance, in the midst of which was the ship, with her sails looking as *green* as leaves, whilst her spars and rigging, and the slender, wither-like shoot of her bowsprit, and her tall black hull, and the white quarter-boats at her davits, twinkled as if gemmed with emeralds, until the light suddenly went out, amid the slinging crash of another gun, and left the ship a pale phantom in the moonlight, that was now fast mastering the remains of the fog.

"Mr. Lee!" sung out Captain Flanders in his deep voice from the after end of the poop. "Call some of the hands aft; man one of the boats and row over to that ship, and tell them to keep up their courage, and that the life-boat and hovellers will be alongside them before long."

To hear was to obey.

"Forward there! tell the boatswain to send some hands along to man the starboard quarter-boat."

"I say, captain!" shouted the pilot. "The fog's cleared, and we ought to get under way. Mr. Lee can do no good, sir. They've got a tug at Ramsgate Harbour, and she'll have the life-boat alongside in three-quarters of an hour!"

"Let Mr. Lee execute *my* orders!" roared the captain, the thunder of his voice—it was like a neigh; I never heard the like of it—mingling with the boom of another gun from the lightship. "The windlass shall not be touched aboard this ship until our fellow-creatures yonder have been reassured!"

I was quite disposed to agree with the pilot that the errand was an idle one, as all the help the ship required would speedily reach her from the shore; but the captain's excitement had already set him handling the falls of the quarter-boat, and the boatswain's pipe having sounded, a dozen men came tumbling aft. Four men jumped into the boat. I tumbled into the stern-sheets and we were lowered into the water. The boat-

falls were unhooked. I shouted, “ Give way, my lads ! ” and we headed for the ship, that was now evidently in a terrible fright, for she was firing her guns as fast as she could load them, and sending up rockets as though she wanted to give us an exhibition of fireworks. The fog still hung in low, long white lines here and there upon the water, but the body of it had fetched away to the northwards, and the moonlight sparkled brightly on the sea. The men squared their arms and their oars cheeped furiously : they were under the impression that life was to be saved, and as they were fresh from their bunks, they had only got a smattering into their skulls of the real state of things.

As we approached the ship, I noticed that she had all her boats fast ; but from the confusion that evidently reigned on board, her yards boxed about any way, her sails hanging loose, her running gear all slack, I easily guessed that she was a foreigner. They let drive another gun when we were about a couple of hundred yards distant, and fired another blue light, the glare of which, helping the moonlight, enabled me to see

that her high poop was crowded with human beings, many of them women. She had gone ashore bow on, and hung firmly: all to starboard of her and ahead were the dry sands glistening like silver in the moonlight, stretching away into the gloom with a thin edging of froth. Whether she had seen us before I could not say: but they raised a wild screech when we were within hail, and in the blue light the gesticulating mob looked like the inhabitants of an infernal world.

“‘Vast rowing!’” I sung out; and then standing up, I bawled, “Can any one speak English aboard of you?”

My question fell unheeded, as it was reasonable it should, seeing that all hands were jabbering and yelling to me; the women tossing their hands and pointing to the sands, and the men dancing upon the poop railing and capering at the backstays like daft folks. What their lingo was I could not then tell, and I don’t think one of their own countrymen would have understood them.

I hailed them again in English, and the hubbub ceasing, I repeated my question.

"Me speakee leedel English!" skreeked a wavering voice.

"What are you?" I shouted. "French?"

"Yash, yash, Franch."

Unhappily, my knowledge of French was very small; however, I thought I would talk to them after the fashion of most Britons, who, when they find a foreigner ignorant of the English language, shout to him at the top of their voices in a dialect which is neither English nor anything else.

"Me English!" I roared. "You ashore—but no danger—you savey that!—no danger—you wait—by-and-by boatee come—you all right, ah? You makee plenty of flare! plenty boatee come quick and takee ashore!"

"Confound it!" I exclaimed, sinking back, for the only good I had done was to set them all roaring at me again; and there they were, asking questions with one voice, in the midst of which they fired another gun.

"I don't think you can do anything more, sir," said the fellow who pulled stroke in my boat, grinning in the moonlight. "They'll

screech themselves quiet presently, and then maybe they'll hear the Ramsgate tug coming to 'em."

"Ay," said a second man, "and there'll be a whole fleet of hovellers around 'em before another hour's gone. I've been hovelling myself off this coast, and if I was on board that ere ship I lay I'd see the lights of a shoal of luggers under way now."

I was very sorry not to be able to explain this to them, though I question if a knowledge of their language would have been of much use to me, for nothing short of a voice as loud as one of their guns could have made itself heard above the hullabaloo aboard. It was a painful sight to see the women in the moonlight tossing their hands, falling down upon their knees, crossing themselves and dragging at their hair, for all the world as though the ship was about to founder ; whilst the men, instead of keeping silence and explaining to the women that, so far as their lives were concerned, they were as safe as if they had been in harbour, went dancing about the deck, pointing here and there, shouting to one another, yelling questions

to me, toppling down upon their noses, and executing a mass of absurd antics. I took her to be an emigrant ship, but could not find any name upon her stern, nor could I imagine where she was bound to, to be humbugging about these sands. Nobody at all who looked like a captain or a mate was distinguishable among the crowd. The wonder to me was that, their fright being so great, they had not lowered their boats; but there they all hung secure at the davits, very good, white, handsome boats, too, and plenty of them.

My attention was now directed by one of the men to the *Waldershare*, who was trying to signal us by means of a lantern made fast to the peak signal halliards and run up and down. Having not the least doubt that help was fast coming to the distracted Frenchmen, from some of the places abreast of us, I gave the order to the men to out oars, and we headed for our own ship. I expected that our departure would be followed by a broadside of yells and screams; instead of which, and almost before we had got way upon the boat, the

hub bub dropped into a sort of hum, the character of which is indescribable, though the effect it produced upon the ear was startling; and then, while a hundred throats split the night with cheers, up went a couple of rockets, and once more a blue light shed its ghastly radiance upon the water.

"They have caught sight of the tug, sir," said one of the men, quietly; and this was undoubtedly the case, for by the time we had got aboard of the *Waldershare* and hoisted the boat, the steamer's lights were visible, with the sparks flying along the smoke she left behind her, and she passed close astern of us with a big white life-boat in tow, whilst our windlass was clanking and our own tug was backing up to us to get hold of our tow-rope.

CHAPTER IV.

TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT.

It was now a bright moonlight night, with a light wind from the southward, not a vestige of the fog visible, the North Fore-land light burning like a yellow star upon a sky full of white stars, and the coast sloping pale and distant down into the west. By three bells—half-past one—our tow-rope was singing under the pull of the tug, and the big French ship, with the steamer lying near her, and two or three luggers hovering around, was dropping rapidly astern.

I had found Mr. Thomas on deck when I came aboard, and he expressed his amazement that the captain should have thought fit to send me on such a fool's errand. However, we had had no time for talk, and

now that we were under way again, he, having had three hours' rest, advised me to go and lie down, as the tug would leave us after we were clear of the Downs, and all hands would be called to make sail.

I scrambled into my bunk without even pulling off my boots, and scarcely was my head down when I was fast asleep.

I was called by Mr. Thomas, and instantly hopped out and went on deck. The breeze had freshened, the tug had left us, and the hands were busy making sail. Down in the east the dawn was faintly streaking the sky, but the moon was still bright in the west, and over the dark line of land the stars were shining clearly. We were now to shift for ourselves, and our voyage had at last fairly begun. Already the fore and main topsails were sheeted home, and the yards mast-headed with a chorus that went echoing far into the darkness. Making sail is a noisy business on board a merchantman. The hands stamped along freely with sheets and halliards in their hands, every gang of workers had their own song and

chorus, and every one on deck and, for the matter of that, every one aloft too, seemed bent on rivalling by his own hoarse shouts the shouts of every other man.

"Now then, my lads, aft here and sheet home this mizzen-*torpsail*!"

"Get that foretack down smartly!"

"Are you all ready there with that inner jib?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Then hoist away!"

"Main-top there! jump aloft and loose the top-gallants'l!"

"Hoist away the main topmast stay-sail!"

"A hand aloft and loose the fore top-gallants'l!"

"Sheet home, my lads, sheet home! overhaul your clewlines there! well the lee sheet! another pull to wind'ard! belay! tally on to the halliards--up with her smartly! Hurrah!"

And not by degrees only, but with smartness that would not have discredited a man-of-war, sail was piled upon the *Waldershare*; and whilst the dawn was slowly changing

into ash-colour the surface of the eastern sky, against which the rim of the sea stood black as ink, and whilst the moon was sailing down the western heaven, whose bright stars gemmed the brows of the tall English cliffs, and the riding-lights of the wind-bound ships in the Downs were twinkling like fire-flies upon the bosom of the dark waters, the *Waldershare*, leaning under her pale spaces of canvas which the wind had moulded into shapes of beauty, with every sail set that would draw, shredded the water with her keen lip and glided like a cloud down the calm English Channel.

There were many little jobs to be done before the men were divided into watches, and before I went below the sun had risen. I stayed a moment or two to watch that sight, and take my first glance at the noble ship under canvas by daylight. First the sky was like frosted silver, but then it grew rosy, and whilst the sea lay blushing, a brilliant fragment of silver stood upon the horizon for an instant; it grew quickly; turning golden as it enlarged, until with a bound the glorious orb soared into a sky

of pearl and rose ; the giant white cliffs of Dover, with the sullen and beetling South Foreland, flashed back the light quickly, and the sea became a luminous green ; the town of Deal lay in a glare of sunshine, the windows of the houses sparkling among the haze that overhung the place, beyond which the country extended as pink as a morning cloud, while close under the land a dozen smacks were creeping with their sails as red as blood, and all ahead the green sea ran in sparkles, dashed here and there with foam, and the coast of France hung like a shadow upon the horizon.

But my eyes were heavy ; the chief mate was wondering to see me linger when I was at liberty to go below ; so down I went, and down I lay, and I never stirred until I was called to go on deck at eight o'clock.

The breeze freshened as the sun mounted the sky, and it was now blowing fresh and steady from the south and west, forward enough to put us on a bowline, and the *Waldershare* was smoking through the water like a steamer. However, as I had suspected, the ship was too deep, and con-

sequently too stiff. With her heavy spars and vast spread of canvas, she should have buried her lee chain plates under such a breeze ; as it was, the slope of her deck was scarcely worth speaking of, and but very little of her copper was exposed to windward, though what could be seen of it flashed brightly along the tumbling green waters and shone like a new brass kettle. Still, her trim did not fret the glorious old hooker. She was stretching a wake astern that ran away into the horizon, and all to leeward the water under the foot of the mainsail, the sheet of which was well aft, swept past in a hum and dazzle of froth, and we could guess our speed by watching the nearer shore slipping by the land beyond it, and the number of vessels we took up and quietly set astern of us.

Nelly came on deck soon after I had relieved Mr. Thomas, and seeing her head at the companion, I had a good excuse to join her, under the pretence of finding her a chair or leading her to a sheltered part of the poop. There was a hand at the wheel, and nobody else aft, but the captain

had only just gone below, and might be up again in a minute.

"I was hoping that you would be on deck," she whispered eagerly, as she gave me her hand. "What a glorious morning! How lovely the land looks! How Phœbe would enjoy this!"

She looked up at the towering canvas with flashing eyes, and at the water seething past, and her breath came and went quickly, for the whole spirit of the windy, green, and foamy scene, with the steady blue sky overhead, and the leaning tower of canvas, and the sparkling shore, came upon her full and strong in an instant.

"You were born to be a sailor's wife," said I, delighted by the kindling happiness in her face; "but this is a noble ship, and just such a home on the rolling deep as I could wish for you."

"How could you have been angry with me, Will, for joining you?" she exclaimed.

"Never reproach me with that again, Nelly. I was too surprised to understand my own mind; and besides, you are so precious to me that I was frightened to

think of your being exposed to the risks of a sea-voyage."

"What is good for you is good for me. I am quite happy. I would not change places with the queen. What have I left? Two kind friends, indeed: but, then, I have left them that I may be with *you*, Will; and you cannot tell me, although I am not yet your wife, that where you are I should not be."

Her dear face glowed as she spoke thus, but she kept her eyes fixed on me bravely and trustfully; indeed, we knew each other's hearts, and thoughts were in us which we could tell each other without the help of words.

She asked me the cause of the guns being fired last night; and whilst I was giving her the story of the French ship, and the part I played in the little drama, the captain's long head emerged through the companion.

"I have been thinking," I whispered to her, "you had better tell him I am an old friend of your guardian. That will save us all bother for the future when he sees

us talking together, which will be pretty often."

Saying which, I placed a chair for her, raised my hat, and left her as Captain Flanders came to her side. Some excuse was wanted to account for my conversing with her, who was simply a young lady passenger in the captain's eyes, whilst I was officer of the watch, and had no business to open my lips except in the way of my duty. Indeed, I have sailed with captains who have strongly objected to their officers holding any sort of converse with passengers. What Captain Flanders' views were on this subject I had not yet had any chance of finding out, but as it was not to be supposed that I could be thrown with Nelly day after day and not speak to her, I imagined, if she told the captain I was a friend, he might relax any discipline he might have in this matter, merely to please her.

I may as well say here that her explanation had the effect I desired, and that Captain Flanders never took any notice of my talking to her; though I was careful

never to engage her in his presence during my watch on deck, or, at any rate, to prolong my conversation for any such length of time as would give him an excuse to order me away to my duty.

I was a little surprised to find that, although in a sense we might fairly consider ourselves at sea, he still stuck to his quaint land-togs. In his high hat, big satin stock, and tall collars which shored up his long, cadaverous, hollow face, he carried a most scriptural air, and was certainly the very last man aboard that would have been taken for captain.

Soon after he had joined Nelly, I discovered that we had one more hand aboard than was included in the muster-roll ; for a fat spaniel dog came floundering on to the poop, and walloped along the deck, making as he went mischievous snaps at the heads of the poultry in the hencoops, and setting them all cackling. He belonged to the skipper, who called to him in his deep, tragic voice to come and “lie down, sir !” which the brute declined to do before he had made various ineffectual efforts to climb

into Nelly's lap. The dear girl endured these onslaughts with a sweet smile, patting the dog after every wobbling jump, and glancing at me as much as to say, "I mean to make friends with Captain Flanders for your sake, Will."

The pilot, who was known by the name of Mr. Bolt, now came on to the poop off the quarter-deck, and after taking a long squint at the skipper and casting a glance aloft and to windward with a very sour face, complained in a husky voice that the captain had forced "a track" against swearing upon him.

"A what?" I shouted.

"Why, a track—a book—a little printed book," he growled, with his face glowing like copper. "I've been to sea, man and boy, eight an' forty year," he continued, "and in all my life I've never been insulted like this before."

I said I did not think the captain meant to insult him; but nothing that I could say would do. He had his own opinion of the matter, and declared that no sea-captain had a right to sermonize him either by

books or anything else. "When I've cast his ship away it'll be time enough for him to begin to sermonize." He considered the tract an insult, and gave me to know that he felt it deeply, and never could have believed that any man calling himself a sailor would have dared to put such an affront upon him. He afterwards eased his mind by jamming himself against the weather backstays, and scowling at the skipper, who, however, took no notice of him.

I thought this action very odd on the part of the captain, however well-intentioned. The result proved it wanting in tact, and a few errors in judgment of this description might soon lead to a strong prejudice against him fore and aft. Ashore the giving of tracts would not challenge a thought : for my part I always take them, and read them too, and have got ideas from them which I am none the worse for having ; but aboard of a ship a tract-giving skipper would be thought, in Jack's lingo, "a rum shake ;" and it is natural that the very monotony of the sea-life, coupled with the sort of passive antagonism that grows up among people

who are thrown constantly together, and that makes every one a keen critic of his fellow, should furnish particular weight to any incident in the least degree unusual or uncommon.

The captain addressed himself with great earnestness to Nelly, and she listened to him with her eyes fixed on the deck. They were presently joined by Madam Espinosa, and shortly afterwards her husband emerged, followed by Mr. Black. I was a good deal amused by the rapt postures into which the Spaniard flung himself as he looked around him, starting tragically as he ran his eyes aloft, then squeezing his hands together at his knees as he cocked his nose at the shore, and waving his flashing hands around him, as he talked to his wife with wonderful volubility in his native tongue. His wife's yellow hair lay all down her back, and her figure seemed bursting out of her tight clothes. Mr. Black looked gravely about him, clearly resolved not to be cheated into any appreciation of the bright and windy scene until he was sure it was worth admiring.

There was just the touch of a light swell on here, but right abeam, and scarcely noticeable ; but I reckoned, if this breeze lasted, the Spanish merchant, if I might judge by the colour of his face, would be on his back before we had made the Isle of Wight, for as the Channel broadened we should be finding more sea.

He came capering over to where I stood presently, first looking at the pilot, then at me, as meditating whom he should address, and no doubt finding the expression on my face the pleasanter one ; for old Bolt stood up against the main backstays as ugly and sour as a defaced figure-head.

“Are you officer ?” says he, nodding quickly, and grinning behind his great nose with every desire to be polite.

“Yes, I am, sir,” I answered.

“Leeftenant, eh ?”

“Why, a kind of lieutenant,” said I, holding there was no use in calling myself mate, as he wouldn’t understand what I meant.

“You speak Spanish ?”

“Not a word, sir.”

"Why not you learn? it is reech language—beautifuller more san English. Why not you learn?"

"I'll try and get at it some of these days," I replied.

"What you tink of dis ship, eh? Is she fine ship?"

"Why, yes, a very fine ship."

"No danger, eh, you tink? Quite safe ship, eh? and fast? De wataire beautiful to look at, but, rabo de lechon de San Antonio! ogley to feel here!" says he, taking his throat in his jewelled hands.

I thought that the most sensible thing he had said yet.

"What zail you call dat?" he asked, pointing to the main-royal.

I told him.

"And dat?"

I gave him the name of that too.

"Marie!" he shouted, "comb here."

His wife waddled over to us, and laid hold of her husband's arm to steady herself. I caught Nelly looking our way, as though she would rather have joined us than stay with the captain, who seemed to be lecturing her.

M. Espinosa explained. I was “leef-tenant,” he said, and I considered the ship a fine ship, and that there was no chance of her drowning; likewise, I exactly knew all the sails, ropes, and spars, and as Marie had been anxious to learn all about the ship, he was sure the “leeftenant” would tell her everything she wished to know. He took about five minutes to say all this, and, as you may guess, expressed himself in very different words from those I have conveyed his meaning by; and so having introduced his wife, he pulled off his hat and pranced over to Mr. Black.

As Madam Espinosa stood to windward of me her yellow hair blew my way, and with half an eye I saw that she was pleased I looked at it. However, in spite of her yellow hair, I was not particularly anxious for her society; for if she was good-natured, she was also very gushing and insipid, as I speedily discovered from her conversation. She plied me very handsomely with questions about the sails and other parts of the ship, and then told me she was an intense lover of the sea, and that she thought all

sailors real darlings. (Murder ! thought I, and looked at poor old Bolt, standing as stiff as a wooden Scotchman at a snuff-seller's shop door.) This was her first long voyage, and she was most anxious to see a gale of wind, although she was naughty to say so, as her husband was a fearful coward and dreaded tempestuous weather at sea. However, Byron's poetry and various novels she had read had filled her with curiosity to see the ocean lashed and the waves boiling, and she asked me with simpering earnestness if I thought there was any chance of our meeting with a real gale of wind before we arrived at Callao ? I believed she was joking at first, but seeing that she really meant what she said, I answered that it was very probable we *should* meet with a real gale of wind between this and that port.

" My poor husband," said she, " is sure to be dreadfully alarmed ; but *I* shall enjoy it. I wish he was not so afraid of the water. I wanted him to hire a yacht during our stay in England ; but no, he would not hear of it."

I expressed my wonder that he should

not have chosen a steamer, and a shorter cut to the west coast of South America than the Horn.

"Oh," said she, "it was my fault. He would have crossed to the United States and gone by land as far as he could ; but," she added, tossing her head, "I told him that *I* should choose a sailing-ship and a long sea-voyage, and if that didn't please him, he might go in a balloon for all I cared, but I would go by water."

I asked her if she had ever been round the Horn, for I didn't know which end of the world she hailed from.

No, she had never been round the Horn ; she had never yet been to Lima.

"It is not like yachting," said I.

"Do yachts never go round the Horn ?" she wanted to know.

"If I may judge from the way in which some yachting men brag, I should say that yachts *have* been round the Horn, and further than the North Pole, to boot."

"I am very fond of yachting," said she.

"Why, yes, it is a pleasant amusement, and quite fit for ladies. Gilt buttons are

always becoming, and smooth water makes sailing very easy ; and with a high barometer and a harbour always under your lee, sailorizing can't fail to be enjoyable, especially when mixed up with plenty of champagne and the newest yachting modes. But I'm afraid, if the Solent were like the Horn, the yacht-builders would soon be starving."

The breakfast bell ringing at this moment obliged her to release me, and she waddled over to her husband.

We were now off Beachy Head, heading about W.S.W. with the Sussex coast melting into a blue film as it ran away into Newhaven and Brighton. We had all the offing we wanted, with the wind holding in the quarter from which it had first come on to blow, and we could now let go the bowlines and ease off the lee braces. All to windward the water, as it ran in short seas and quick tumbles of foam, was ablaze under the brilliant sunshine ; the breeze was very fresh, and a light white-painted ship on the port bow, that we were overhauling as though she had been a buoy, found a

main top-gallant sail as much as she could carry ; and when we passed her, her decks sloped towards us like the side of a hill. But the *Waldershare* was now under all the canvas that would draw, and standing alongside the pilot to windward, and looking aloft at the vast spaces of white cloths stretching in slender points to the yard-arms, with their hollows full of delicate shadows, the taut weather-leeches of the royals and top-gallant sails with a little shiver in them, like the sharp ripple of a flag steadily blowing, and the staysails ballooning in superb curves, and the shrouds and backstays standing like harp-strings, through which the wind was singing a merry chorus, whilst the big black tops threw shadows over the heads of the bright masts in which the light was glancing, and every now and again a little sea would strike the weather-bow and flash in smoke over the forecastle, I thought our ship made a noble show, and was an object to fire the pride in every sailor's heart aboard of her.

By eight o'clock that evening we had backed the main-topsail, and lay waiting

for a boat to take the pilot ashore. The Isle of Wight stood broad on the starboard beam, and I went to Nelly and whispered in her ear to take a good look at those cliffs, as they were probably the last piece of English land she was likely to see for many a long day. The sun was within a quarter of an hour of his setting, and the sky all around him, and the high summer clouds which swept athwart him, were as red as blood, whilst the water was a dark green surface that to leeward went pouring away to the looming and terrace-like cliffs, and the towering southern downs of the island that stood in a pink haze, though even at that distance the greens and greys and whites were visible. Fore and aft every eye aboard the ship was fixed on the land, and the feeling that the night would soon shut out every sign of the English coast, and that some among us might never behold the old home again, was strong in the minds of the Englishmen in the ship's company. The only sail in sight was the small powerful cutter that was heading for us close hauled, and that came driving down in a smother of

foam. Even after the sun had sunk, the whole of the heavens down to the uttermost east held for a while the delicate crimson of its farewell light, and the stars were glittering windily even before this crimson melted out of the east, and died overhead, and faded into a long, narrow, but extremely vivid flush over the spot where the sun had sunk. As this flush vanished the coast line died out, and nothing was visible to the eye but the long stretch of dark waters. The moon was in the south, throwing a pale-greenish light upon the sea, but the breeze had freshened after the sunset, and before the cutter came alongside we had hands aloft furling the royals and the mizzen top-gallant sail.

The pilot, with a bundle of letters in his pocket, among which was one from Nelly to Phœbe Johnson, after shaking hands with Mr. Thomas and me, and touching his hat with very surly civility to the skipper, dropped into the cutter cleverly.

“Man the starboard main-braces,” shouted Mr. Thomas, and the great yards swung round. “Haul taut to wind’ard ! Now get

your main-sheet aft." The main-tack was boarded, a watch-tackle clapped on to it, and bowsed down to the tune of "Pull, my bully boys." The helm was put down and the ship brought to her course, and whilst the songs of the sailors were still echoing along her decks, and the wind among the sails was awaking a little thunder overhead, the *Waldershare*, leaning her nose down as a dog sides his head to make a better lever of his jaws, shattered the first sea she struck into an acre of foam, and started with a rush for the open waters of the English Channel and the great Atlantic deep beyond.

CHAPTER V.

AT SEA.

It blew fresh all that night, accompanied during the first watch with two or three squalls of rain ; also veering westerly, which obliged us to brace sharp up in order to lay our course. But even with the leech of the top-gallant sail lifting, and a single reef in the two topsails, the ship smoked through the water at a speed beyond anything I could have imagined ; and by noon on the following day we were clear of the Channel, breasting the long Atlantic rollers, with the wind dead at south, and our yards hard against the lee rigging.

At breakfast that morning no passengers were to be seen. We did not carry a stewardess—indeed, very few passenger sailing-ships in the South American and

Australian trade did in those days—and I had to get what news I could of Nelly from the steward, who told me that he had accosted her through her cabin door, and that her answer was—she did not want any breakfast, and preferred to remain where she was. So I made up my mind to lose sight of her for two or three days, during which time it should be my business to see that she was well looked after; but within half an hour of my coming on deck at noon, I heard voices on the quarter-deck, and looking over the poop-rail, to my very great astonishment and pleasure, I saw Nelly holding the hand of Mr. Thomas, who was in the act of conducting her up the poop-ladder. She was pale enough, poor girl; but she gave me a smile that, I think, rather astonished Mr. Thomas, and her fine eyes flashed as she glanced at the sea and watched the brilliant dance of the ship over the foaming water.

"I was afraid you were going to have a spell of sea-sickness," said I. "I am heartily glad to see you on deck."

"I *was* a little ill this morning," she

answered ; "but I am all right now,—and this is all I want to make me quite well ! " she exclaimed, her nostrils dilating as she breathed in the sweet and sweeping wind, and grasping a backstay with her hand.

Mr. Thomas slued his little head on one side and squinted up at me, as much as to say, "How the deuce have you made her so familiar with you in this time ? " after which he eyed her with an admiration that I dare say would have gotten him a cuff over the ear from his month-old wife, had she been there to see it. He was not so smartly dressed as usual, guessing, I suppose, that the ladies would not turn out. He seemed to think of this now, for presently, looking at his boots and waistcoat, he ran on to the quarter-deck, and we saw no more of him.

I fixed a chair for Nelly to leeward of the mizzen-mast, and fetched a big overcoat in which I wrapped her legs ; and now she said she was quite happy, and not in the least sick,—and, indeed, I could see, by the dawning roses in her cheeks, what the wind was doing for her. The Espinosas' cabin

was next hers, and from her account I guessed the Spaniard was undergoing a martyrdom.

"His groans are dreadful," she told me ; "and I suppose his poor wife is too ill to help him, for I heard him shrieking out her name, but he got no answer. Afterwards he rolled out of his berth—for there was a noise in his cabin that gave me that idea. I imagine he is more alarmed than sick."

"Both, no doubt," said I, laughing.

I flatter myself that my being with her increased her happiness, but I never should have believed she would prove so good a sailor, nor so greatly enjoy the scene around her. There was not, indeed, much sea on, though the wind was what sailors call a top-gallant breeze ; but there was a long Atlantic swell right astern which made the deep ship roll rather heavily, and being close-hauled, each time she rolled to windward, she doubled the power of the wind, so that it tore through the rigging in screams like railway whistles, and boomed out from the bellies of the sails under the

feet of them with a sound of thunder. The sky was a pale green over the horizon, and a steel blue overhead, and across it huge, wool-like clouds were stretching. The forecastle, wet with the spray that laced it, flashed in the sun, and now and again a head of froth would blow over the bulwarks into the waist, and scatter along the decks in big soapy blobs of yellow bubble. The watch on deck were at work on jobs in various parts of the ship, and their costumes of coloured shirts, canvas or serge breeches, caps of every description, and every man with a belt round his waist and a sheath-knife at his hip, increased the picturesque effect of the whole scene. To leeward was a large barque bound for the English Channel, with stun'sails aloft and alow, frothing the swell that sent her pitching and bowing onwards, with the Dutch flag blowing over her stern, and her copper glancing against the boiling water every time she tossed her heels.

“Who would not be a sailor, Will!” exclaimed my sweetheart, casting her beautiful grey eyes aloft and watching the

royal-mastheads waving with stately motion
to and fro under the flying clouds.

"Perhaps, after all, it's a gayer life than I sometimes think it, Nell. Yet no voyage that ever I have taken or am likely to go on will equal this one, and I am not going to tell you why."

"It will be one long enjoyment for me," said she. "Madam Espinosa is not a very brilliant lady, but she is good-natured, and I shall get on very well with her. I only wish Phœbe were with us. I like your chief mate, too—Mr. Thomas; he is a nice little man, extremely polite, but how very, *very* tiny! But I do not quite understand Captain Flanders. Is he quite right, Will, do you think?"

"Hush, my dear girl!" I exclaimed, glancing aft and then down the skylight, to make sure no one was within hearing. "That is a dangerous question to ask. Considering that he is captain of this ship and lord paramount, I should be sorry to believe he is *not* quite right."

She looked somewhat abashed and frightened.

"I dare say you judge him," I continued, "as the pilot who left us last night, I know, did, by his religious talk."

"No," she interrupted, "not by that, although he seems to care for no other topic. His manner is curious, and his conversation is very often curious too; and his manner and his conversation put together are quite enough to make one think that he is not altogether rational."

"What was he talking about to you yesterday so earnestly?"

"About spirits."

"About *what*?" I exclaimed.

"About spectres and apparitions, Will. He believes in spirits, and spoke of one that visited him last week, and that told him what sort of a voyage we are to have."

"Good Lord!" I ejaculated, as the image of his egg-shaped head rose in my mind.

"He was so earnest at times as really to be alarming," she said, lowering her voice (with a little smile twisting about the corners of her mouth as if she should say, "You see I am right, my dear, and although

you frightened me by the way you said *hush!* you're beginning to find out that I'm the wiser of the two.") "He said that he was a Christian, but not a modern one. He was a primitive Christian; he disbelieved in clergymen, churches, archbishops, and everything like that, and assured me that several spirits had told him no prayers were listened to that were not offered in the way the early Christians prayed, namely, in caves and woods and in the open air. Now, Will, would not you think anybody cracked to talk so?"

"Cracked! I should think so, indeed!" said I, after a low whistle. "But for all that he may be a very good sailor and understand his business, and if so, his believing in supernatural spirits need not trouble us; for it is better for a sailor to believe in ghosts than in Jamaica rum, the spirit that has too many believers already among us. How do you feel now?"

"As if I should like to walk," she answered, with her face finely tinted by the strong wind, and bronze threads of hair blowing about her cheeks. However, it

would not do for me to be seen walking with her, and I was quite sure that, audacious as her triumph over the demon nausea had made her, she would never be able to keep her feet; so I advised her to sit still and wait for lunch, which would be on the table at one; "and mind, Nelly," said I, "to ask the steward for a slice of real salt junk and a sea-biscuit, and a glass of bitter beer, as I don't suppose you would like to drink cold grog, though that is the correct brew for shipboard; and, depend upon it, old Neptune will appreciate the compliment you pay him in calling for his time-honoured victuals, and will immediately hail you as a first-class seaman, proof against the most monstrous seas and the wildest weather."

The crew went to dinner at half-past twelve. The cook was a cockney, a fat fellow in tight dungaree trousers, and arms and face like veal after it is "blown" by the butchers to hang in their shops. Like most sea-cooks, and indeed like most men who get their livers swollen by standing before ovens all their lives, he was a

very irritable man, and on this, the very first day of our being at sea, his temper led to something very nearly resembling a riot.

One of the boys was in the act of quitting the galley, holding in his arms a mess kid full of smoking meat, when, as I assumed, he gave the cook some saucy words; anyhow, I saw the cook's leg fly out of the galley and deal the boy a kick at the moment when the ship rolled heavily to leeward. The boy flew head over heels into the lee scuppers, and the meat bolted out of the kid as he flopped down; but the same roll of the ship likewise propelled the cook (who had got more way on him than he could manage, through the jerk he had given his leg) clean through the galley door; he tumbled over the boy, and there they lay wallopping and floundering upon the deck, in the midst of the steam from the pieces of meat, which jumped all about them as they flung their arms and legs about. The boy roared murder! and I sprang off the poop and ran forward; at the same moment the hands came tumbling out of

the forecastle, where they were waiting hungrily for their dinner, to see what the matter was.

The cook, gathering himself up out of the scuppers, exclaimed that the boy had "sarsed him." This the boy, who stood blubbering, being indeed badly scalded about the right ear, admitted, but said that the cook had brought it on himself by calling him a bad name. The men in the port watch, however, to whom the kid of beef belonged, casting their eyes upon the pieces of meat which washed about in the scuppers, or lay jammed among the rusty links of the chain-cable, began to understand that they stood to get no beef for dinner that day, and called upon me to know what was to be done. I said I would speak to the captain, who would no doubt order a fresh supply of meat to be served out; but the cooking of it would keep them waiting two hours, so that the best thing they could do was to get the starboard watch to share their meat with them, and they must share their "duff" by way of return: enough for all hands might be made out in that way,

and the fresh rations would be ready for them by supper-time.

This proposal led to an argument as noisy as an Irish parliament. All hands were now assembled to leeward of the galley, some of them kicking the meat about with their feet, and they looked a very formidable body of men. There are two periods when sailors are proverbially ill-tempered: when they are hungry, and when they are newly aroused from sleep. In this case the men were hungry, and as each man in my watch honestly believed he could eat up all that the appetites of his mates were likely to leave him, there was a great deal of grumbling over my suggestion. However, there was common sense in it, and it prevailed at last; and I went aft to get the skipper's leave to order the steward to serve out another dinner of meat to the port watch.

But the men only waited until my back was turned to fasten upon the cook; they drove him out of the galley and got him under the port forecastle ladder, and here they pelted him with the pieces of capsized meat, their temper rising with the progress

of their revenge, until, conceiving that they would end in pitching him overboard, he started out of his corner with a loud yell, burst through the men like smoke, and came pelting into the cuddy, streaming with grease and sweat, followed by all hands, who, however, stopped short at the quarter-deck capstan.

It happened that Mr. Thomas, hearing the row going on forward, and not a little alarmed by the shout uttered by the cook before he fled, threw open his cabin door, and ran out just in time to meet the cook, who, coming up tilt against him, sent him floundering on his back; the cook pitched over him, striking the Espinosas' cabin door with a crash that produced a loud cry from the terrified Spanish merchant, who was evidently under the impression that some dangerous accident had befallen the ship.

I saw all this as I was making my way to the captain's cabin, and nearly suffocated with laughter at the expression on the little mate's face as he got up and wiped the grease off his cheek and clothes. He was

blue with rage, for he valued his clothes more than his dignity.

"What is all this uproar about?" exclaimed the captain in his deep tragedy voice, throwing open his door.

"They want to murder me, sir!" gasped the cook. "They've threatened to slit my throat, sir! they're a-waitin' to dash open my 'ed, sir, and scatter my hintellects!" he cried, making his case, with the cunning of cowardice, a desperate one, that he might be sure of the captain's support.

He certainly looked a dreadful object, with great lumps of fat sticking in his hair, and his face beautifully lined with the grease of the meat, that, having been rolled about by the feet of the men, had gathered from the deck and cable-range, as you may believe, a very pretty variety of dirt, and his fat body quivering in his blue shirt like a jelly in a napkin.

"What's dat? Murder? Coot troats! Split open hails—eh! eh!" shouted a voice, and the Espinosas' cabin door flew open and out bolted the Spanish merchant. He plumped up against the cuddy table with

the roll of the ship, and gazing around him with an eye bright with terror, stood for some seconds staring at the cook and then rushed up to the captain, leaving the door of the cabin, in which his wife lay, wide open. He had nothing on but a day-shirt and a pair of silk drawers, and it was perhaps fortunate for me that my astonishment at the magnitude of the results following the trifling accident of a capsized mess kid overpowered my sense of the ridiculous.

"What is dat I hear, captain?" he sputtered. "Murder! cut troat! Valga ne Dios! what do he do here?" pointing to the cook. "O que es eso, que es eso, peu!" and grabbing at his stomach he tumbled upon the deck, too sick to stand.

"Antonio! Antonio!" shrieked his wife; "where are you, Antonio? Do you know you have left the door open, you cruel creature, and everybody can see me?"

Hereupon, to cut this matter short—for really my heart ached for the poor lady who lay exposed in her bunk—I sprang round the table, collared the Spaniard, bundled

him neck and crop into his cabin, and shut the door upon him.

“What is the meaning of all this?” exclaimed Captain Flanders, addressing me with a great sternness of manner, though all the same I do not think any one could have failed to notice the look of indecision and even alarm in his face; “and what are all the men waiting for yonder?”

I told him what I knew of the incident of the mess kid.

“They’re a-waitin’ to murder me, sir!” quavered the cook.

“Nonsense!” shouted little Thomas, whose Welsh blood was glowing in every fibre, and whose face was as red as a powder-flag. “That fat ruffian knocked me down in his terror, Captain Flanders—sent me sprawling, sir, covered with his infernal dripping—and if the men boil him in his own coppers, by the Lord! he’ll get no more than he deserves.”

“Mr. Thomas, I am surprised to hear such language from you, sir. I won’t allow it, sir! It shows a spiritual neglect that’s intolerable to me to witness in a man of

education and an officer in the mercantile marine," exclaimed the captain, waving his arm with a most impressive gesture, and scowling down upon the little man.

Here the Espinosas' door was opened a couple of inches, and the Spaniard thrust out his long nose.

"Captain, captain!" he quavered. "Has he gone yet? que demonio! que demonio!"

"Do, Captain Flanders, lock this door, please; he'll be exposing me again, captain!" called out Madam Espinosa.

However, Antonio had twisted his nose round to command the cuddy, and encountering the eyes of the cook fixed upon him, he slammed the door instantly, and I heard him rattling away in his native lingo to his wife, who gave it him back pretty hot, as I am bound to confess.

Mr. Thomas made no reply to the skipper's very offensive and unnecessary rebuke, but repeatedly glanced at him with bitter indignation, whilst he endeavoured to get rid of some of the grease upon his waistcoat by rubbing it with a pocket-handkerchief.

"What are you doing aft here?" I

shouted to the cook, longing to kick him for the bother he had brought upon all hands. “Leave the cuddy this moment, sir! Away with you forward!”

“Look there, captain!” he answered, pointing to the quarter-deck; “they’re all a-waitin’ for me; it’s more than my life’s worth to go forward, sir.”

Captain Flanders paid no attention to what he said, but addressing Mr. Thomas with a burst of irritability, exclaimed, “I desire that you will not stare at me in that way, sir. Give me leave to tell you, Mr. Thomas, that it is ungentlemanly and offensive, and a sign of low breeding, sir, to stare at any one as you are staring at me!”

At this speech Mr. Thomas’s wrath seemed to desert him, and cocking his eyebrows at me in such a way that it twisted his little face into a complete note of interrogation, he slued himself round and disappeared in his cabin.

The captain walked aft.

“Pray, sir,” I shouted, “what am I to do with the men? The port watch haven’t

had any dinner. Shall the steward serve out some more beef to them, sir ? ”

“ Act as you think best, Mr. Lee,” he replied with great blandness. “ Your judgment will direct you.” And to my very great astonishment, he entered his cabin and shut the door.

I went on to the poop and sung out to the men, several of whom had gone forward, that the captain had ordered a fresh supply of meat to be given them, and that in consideration of the starboard watch sharing their beef with the men in the port watch, I would take it on myself to order grog to be served to all hands ; but on condition that they gave me their word not to further molest the cook. This proposal raised a cheer among them, and whilst they all lay aft to drink the grog that the steward handed to them from the quarter-deck capstan, the cook went forward and not a word was said to him.

I made Nelly laugh with my description of Espinosa’s fright and the scene in the cuddy, but the significant part of the incident I kept to myself—I mean the extra-

ordinary conduct of Captain Flanders. Presently the tiffin-bell rang and she went down to lunch, promising to ask for a piece of salt beef as I had advised, and to whiten her teeth upon a sea-biscuit.

The breeze had somewhat moderated, and was now blowing dead from the west; the ship was laying her course, and could well carry all the sail I chose to give her. The reefs were shaken out of the fore and mizzen topsails, the royals set, and the fore-top-mast stun'sail run up. The extra pressure sent the old hooker swirling through it nobly. On either bow the foam stood up like snow-hills, and rushed glittering and creaming aft, as though churned up by paddle-wheels. The swell was broad on the starboard quarter, and when the ship's head sank to the rise of it aft, the green sea was frothed a dozen fathoms away beyond her bows; and as her stern came down again, you could see the stun'sail boom buckle, and every sail swell out as though a gale had taken it, whilst all along the poop the brasswork quivered with fitful flashes, bright as the sunlight in a mirror, and the tiller

chains clanked harshly as the green seas poured away in a roar under her counter.

I did not see Mr. Thomas again until he came on deck to relieve me, and then I stayed a few minutes to exchange some words with him. His Welsh spirit still fretted angrily over the treatment he had received in the cuddy, and he complained bitterly of what he spoke of as the "unwarrantable insult" that had been offered him.

"Bolt, the pilot, also complained of his having insulted him," said I. "Did I tell you, Mr. Thomas, that the captain gave him a tract to read upon profane swearing? That is his hobby, and I don't say it isn't a good one, only he has no right to affront people with it."

"I'll tell you what it is, Lee; I'm beginning to believe my friend was right when he told me that the skipper's father hanged himself."

"There's no doubt that Captain Flanders is eccentric," said I.

"Ay, damned eccentric!" he exclaimed with a scowl, looking aloft.

"He believes in spirits and primitive Christianity, sir, and says that people ought to pray only out-of-doors. But I don't think, Mr. Thomas, that we should consider a man cranky for holding views we can't understand or decline to accept. He *may* be right, and if so, then it is we who must be cranky for not agreeing with him."

"For the matter of that, he's welcome to believe in anything he likes," growled the little man; "but any belief that makes him think himself entitled to insult me before a greasy lubber of a cockney sea-cook won't suit my book, and whether he's right or not in his ideas, I shall never believe that his head-timbers are sound."

"Still, do you know, sir," said I, "that I do believe he is a good man at bottom, and means the right thing. His sending me away in the boat the other night to the French ship might have been unseaman-like, but it proves him a humane man, and we ought to let that score heavily in his favour, sir, seeing the stuff that a good many sea-captains are made of nowadays. His notions of swearing may be a little too

strict for shipboard, but it's better to be out of your reckoning too far to windward than too far to leeward—that's my way of thinking."

"But what on earth did he mean by telling me not to stare at him?" the little man shouted, as red as fire over the thought of it. "Did you hear him call me ungentlemanly and low-bred, and wanting in manners and the Lord knows what besides for so doing? *I*, who can trace my descent to Ap-Thomas the bard, a real chieftain, Mr. Lee, who lived three hundred years ago, and one of whose forefathers was a prince, by jingo!"

I had thought this the worst part of the whole business, and it was the only part that had given me real uneasiness. However, I made him no answer, for, in truth, neither of us had as yet had any time to form a solid judgment, and I believed no good would come of alarming each other.

At this point we were interrupted by the captain coming on deck, on which, with an expression of uneasiness, Mr. Thomas told

me I had better go below; and down I went.

During the afternoon a large schooner had been made out, with nothing but her topsails visible above the horizon on the weather quarter. She was heading S.E., and we were heading S.S.W., and consequently before I quitted the deck we had risen her hull. At four bells she was about a couple of miles away to windward, and she was then seen to be a long, large, exceedingly beautiful schooner yacht, of certainly not less than two hundred and fifty tons burden, the very handsomest vessel of her class I had ever set eyes on. I thought she had meant to cross our stern, and was watching her with great interest as she swept like a swan over the long rollers, her copper bottom gleaming like dark gold under the green surges, which fell hissing and boiling away from her bows, whilst her sails, as white as milk, swayed with the airy grace of a gull's wings against the Indian blue of the western evening sky, and the sun flashed in her streaming ebony-black sides as she yawed to the great ocean

swell that chased her, when she suddenly hauled her wind and headed on a course directly parallel with ours.

"Hello!" thought I, "she wants to try her speed with us."

Through the glass I could see some ladies aft, watching us, with a number of gentlemen, and forward was her crew, a whole mob of smartly dressed sailors. All the canvas she could show was packed on her. She had got the wind as we had, abeam—not her best sailing point, perhaps, but it laid her port bulwarks almost flush with the water; and through it she tore, the spray flashing in smoke over her nose, and her decks and hull all in a quiver with the play of the sunshine on them.

She was fore-reaching on us fast. I could easily imagine that this effort to pass us was the result of an after-dinner wager, and certainly the gestures and movements of the gentlemen were full of excitement. I stood with Nelly, and Mr. Thomas looking at her over the weather poop-rail.

"Why, Mr. Thomas," said I, "we mustn't let her beat us!"

"But suppose we can't help it?" quoth Mr. Thomas.

"Lord, how she smokes through it!" I ejaculated, and I ran my eye aloft at our own canvas; every sail was drawing, and as round as the side of an apple.

Captain Flanders stood near the wheel, now and again turning his head to glance at the yacht, but evidently taking very little interest in the race. I could see the hands forward gazing aft at us eagerly, as though wondering that no orders came to them, for we could have set at least three more stun'-sails, if no more; and what *they* would have done for the *Waldershare* we could only have waited and seen. But the skipper made no sign, and so we had to watch ourselves being beaten.

Our own speed was not less than ten knots, and the yacht I calculated could not be doing less than thirteen. Presently she ran up her distinguishing flag—a square with yellow ground, and a horizontal arrow. However, we could make nothing of this, not having a reference book.

"Hoist the answering pennant," sung out

Captain Flanders ; and as I went aft to bend the flag on to the signal halliards, he said, " She'll be hailing us in a minute, and she can read our name."

It was a wonderful and beautiful sight to see her flying along the water, with her white decks bare to our gaze as they seemed to lean almost up and down to us ; sometimes lifted high on a green swell, which she dashed into foam where it took her, then sinking behind a long, high, emerald-bright ridge that hid the whole of her hull, whilst her slender wake trailed away into the toppling seas astern, like a long thread of silver ; though I dare say she found us a noble sight too, with our vast spread of symmetrical canvas soaring into the sky, and the whole beautiful hull exposed as it leaned away from her, laying bare a broad length of shining copper, and dashing off the seas in tall fountains of foam which were as full of colour as a prism.

When she was almost abeam of us they gave her a wide sheer ; this brought her so close that the faces of the people aboard were distinctly visible. The ladies consisted

of two very pretty young women and a matronly looking old dowager. There were no less than five gentlemen, one of whom, a tall, handsome young man in a blue jacket, thrown carelessly over a white flannel shirt, hailed us.

"We've read your name on your stern. Your hull is a beautiful one, and you ought to be a fast ship; but the *Violet* can show you any road you want to take."

"Answer him, Mr. Lee," called out the skipper, possibly afraid of being "chaffed" before the crew, who were crowding the forecastle, and giving my voice the preference over Mr. Thomas's, which certainly had not much carrying power.

"We're bound round the Horn; will you pilot us?" I bawled through my hands.

I could see them all laughing as he shook his head.

"If you were bound to a warmer climate," he answered, "we should be happy to call in and tell them you're coming."

"We should like to know the name of the owner of that yacht?"

"Lord ——," he shouted back.

"Is his lordship aboard?"

He nodded and waved his hand, on which I pulled off my hat, and he returned the bow.

"If I could come near enough to you," he cried, "I'd throw a case of champagne on board; but you must take the will for the deed. Where are you bound to?"

"Callao. And you?"

"Gibraltar. A prosperous voyage!"

And as he said this, the yacht's helm was put down. We instantly forged ahead. Then she put her helm up, eased off her sheets, and ran under our stern, the ladies waving their handkerchiefs and the gentlemen their hats, which salutations we returned with hearty good will.

"Bound to Gibraltar, eh?" grumbled little Thomas. "That's the sort of sailor-ing I should like. Plenty of champagne and cigars, eh, Mr. Lee? and nothing to do but to read novels and be blown along by the wind."

"I am afraid Captain Flanders is going to be polite," exclaimed Nelly, with a glance over her shoulder, and looking

down at the chief mate with a pout. This was true enough, but then she had seen him coming. He gave her his arm, and as he led her away, I heard him congratulate her on being so good a sailor.

"Lee," said Mr. Thomas, looking after her, and then giving me an interrogative squint, "what a very fine, frank, charming woman Miss Maitland is!"

I started at the name, but recollecting myself, said, "Very."

"I tell you what it is," said he with a grin; "you and she have met before. No nonsense! You're old friends."

"We are," I answered; and I thereupon told him as much of the story as I thought it necessary he should know. I explained that she and I were engaged to be married, and that she had resolved to take this voyage with me.

"Well, there's nothing odd in that," says he, pulling his beard; "but the idea isn't a bad one, and if I had thought of it, and could have mustered the money, dash my wig if I wouldn't have shipped my wife in the same way. Nobody could object. Any

woman may take a passage in a ship if she pays for it. But you were groaning to me the other night over the hardship of having to leave your sweetheart, although now you say you knew she was coming."

"Did I say that? Well, it was my awkward way of expressing sympathy for you. Your description of your feelings at having to leave your wife affected me, sir. I thought you would feel comforted if I put myself with you in the same boat, Mr. Thomas."

"Well, well," said he, looking mystified, "when a man's in love, he's bound to contradict himself. But it's no business of mine. You've got a plucky girl for a sweetheart, and I hope you'll treat her well, Mr. Lee. Only take my advice, and don't let the skipper get scent of your romance, or you'll set him writing tracts and neglecting the ship's reckoning, and he'll be down on you tooth and nail for being immoral enough to love anybody but yourself." He cast a vindictive look in the direction of the captain.

"All that the skipper knows about it,"

said I, "is that Miss Maitland and I were acquainted before we met on this ship, and that she herself explained to him." I thought it best to speak of her as Miss Maitland. It might have complicated the romance too much for Mr. Thomas's sympathy to have told him that she was sailing under false colours.

"I suppose you know," said he, "that the skipper's a widower?"

"I did not know," I answered; "but I should have been more surprised to hear that he had got a wife living."

This sarcasm was too fine for Thomas.

"You must take care, Lee, that he don't go and fall in love with your sweetheart," he continued, with a grin so broad that it was impossible to look at it without laughing.

"That won't make me uneasy," I answered. "Indeed, I rather wish it would happen, for it would double his anxiety that she should be comfortable."

"Ay, but suppose," said he, thrusting his little hands into his waistcoat pockets as though he strove to subdue the occa-

sional heave of internal mirth that convulsed his minute frame—"suppose, Lee, he should find out that you are her sweetheart, and turn to and grow jealous, eh? and sulk over you in his cabin, and plot a diabolical scheme to get rid of you, eh, Lee? Ha! ha! Why, love stops at nothing—let Miss Maitland witness to that beautiful idea!"

"She'll have to believe in spirits before he falls in love with her," said I, looking at Nelly as she paced alongside of the skipper on the weather side of the poop, holding on to his arm, whilst I could hear his deep voice sounding in a muffled growl, and his left arm working like a pump-handle. It was not to be supposed that the mate's suggestion could make me very uneasy; yet it did flash upon me that if the skipper *should* fall in love with her—and the amiable manner in which she listened to his talk about spirits and primitive Christianity was as likely to win him as anything I could imagine—my sweetheart's position would be a rather embarrassing one.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAG-END OF A CYCLONE.

ON Wednesday we were in latitude 40° and longitude about 16° 5',—some two hundred miles to the eastward of the Azores. The fresh westerly breeze had given us frisky heels, and we had rolled through the Bay of Biscay into the broad bosom of the North Atlantic, with our fore-topmast stun'sail set day and night, and with no other meddling with the running rigging than the occasional hauling taut or slackening of the weather-braces.

By this time both Madam Espinosa and Mr. Black had got, or professed to have got, over their sickness, and were often on deck, and even occupied their places at the cuddy table, though their appetites were small; but the poor Spaniard's stomach

was still anywhere but in its right place, and when he came on deck shortly after noon on this Wednesday, for the first time since we had cleared the English Channel, he presented one of the most ludicrously pitiable figures mortal foreigner ever cut at sea.

To begin with, his wife had pinned around his head (at his own request, no doubt) an immense blue silk handkerchief or shawl, as big as a flag, rolled up into the shape of a turban, the ends of which fell down his back as far as the small of it. Under this turban his huge hooked nose stuck out like a signboard ; his face was as yellow as a guinea, and the contrast of it with the blue of his head-gear did not add to his loveliness, as you may believe. He wore a long flapping bright-green dressing-gown that descended to his ankles, and below sprawled his feet, thrust into a pair of long yellow slippers with toes of highly varnished red leather. As this extraordinary figure came slowly up the companion, moving upwards in fitful jerks, which were produced, as I found, by his wife who followed behind,

and was helping him with an occasional shove, the man at the wheel, a grim, unshaven salt, gazed at him for some moments with his mouth wide open, astounded and even alarmed by the extraordinary apparition, until the truth dawning upon him, he gave vent to his feelings in a loud yell of laughter, and, as if to show how utterly unable he was to control himself, spat his quid clean overboard.

However, the fresh air did the poor fellow some good, for after a bit he began to look about him, and hold out his long yellow claws to the sun, that was hot enough to suit even a negro, though when now and again the vessel gave an extra pitch—like a capering colt startled into a wilder brisk by a gad-fly—he would lay hold of the arms of his chair and deliver himself of a deep groan. I have seen old sailors, as seasoned, you would have thought, to every possible motion of a ship as their stomachs were to salt junk, as sick as dogs in short cross seas, or when lying roasting and rolling upon a glassy tropical ocean; but I never suffered from sea-sickness in my

life, and so I do not pretend to know what the feeling is like ; but no experience of it in others ever brought me so near to comprehending the horrors of it as did the face of the Spaniard, as he sat to-day in his blue turban, groaning and toasting himself in the sunshine.

I went up to him out of civility and asked him how he did.

"Bad," said he ; "varee bad!"

"Oh, you'll get over it soon," said I, cheerfully. "You must eat, my dear sir—force yourself to eat: you never know what's going to ease you." He held up his hand, but not understanding the gesture, I went on : "The captain of the last ship I was in always endeavoured to get his passengers who complained of sea-sickness to eat. 'Try forward, and then try back again,' he would say. 'First taste this, then that: if boiled mutton fails, pickled pork may succeed; and if pickled pork don't do—'"

"*Cuidado!*!" yelled the Spaniard, and I had just time to hop aside.

"Bo'sun!" I shouted, "send a hand aft

here with a swab and a bucket of water." And I quitted Mr. Espinosa with a very sheepish face. Evidently I was not the kind of physician he wanted. Indeed, he called his wife and begged her to entreat me not to approach him again until he was quite well: a message she delivered with a good deal of bluntness, though I believe she did not mean to be offensive, but that she thought I would be tickled by her girlish candour. I know nothing more uncomfortable than a middle-aged woman who gives herself the airs of a maiden and gushes on trifles, just as if people were blind and could not see that she was altogether too old for enthusiasms. I could scarcely forbear laughing in this poor lady's face when I glanced over her hull, that was as motherly as a chubby-sided South Seaman, and peeped at the corner of her eyes, where the powder lay snug in the crows'-feet, whilst she was giggling away as if she was not yet turned forty, and feigning a rapture over everything, whether she thought it tiresome or not. I did not notice that she gave her husband much of her attention: but I am

not going to blame her for that; she had scarcely got over her own sea-sickness; and really, when I looked at the poor guinea-coloured creature, with his nose that cast a shadow upon the deck as big as a flying-jib, and his long saffron-tinted fingers, which the rings somehow made extraordinarily ugly, and the skin of his throat like an old piece of parchment covering a whipcord frame, I could not but think that she deserved some credit for not having drowned him months before, or ridding herself of him in some other way; for she, at all events, was a presentable woman, whereas he was the ugliest man that nature ever let loose upon the world.

I had returned from giving some directions to the ship's carpenter, and was standing on the weather side of the poop close against the ladder, glancing aloft at the canvas and admiring the spread and set of it, and then looking down at the ship's side, the green of which gaily matched the glorious blue of the sea, divided as they were by a broad line of foam through which the copper shone with sudden glancings of

dull golden light as the ship lurched to leeward, when Captain Flanders walked slap up to me and stationed himself by my side.

"The barometer is falling, Mr. Lee," he said, "yet the weather looks settled."

"Yes, sir, it looks steady enough all to windward, though I don't know if that haze to leeward means anything."

He stooped his head so as to see the lee horizon under the foot of the mainsail. "I forgot to ask you the other day," said he, rearing his body slowly, and confronting me with his long, gaunt face, and speaking in his deepest tones—"but my memory is not what it was—whether in the unhappy quarrel that took place between the cook and the crew there was any bad language used?"

"I didn't hear any, sir," I replied.

"I presume not," he exclaimed, fixing his gloomy eyes full on my face; "otherwise you would have reported it to me, as you have received my orders on that subject."

"No, sir, I can't say I noticed that any bad language was used."

"What sort of a disposition have you observed among the crew?"

"They seem a very steady, willing crew, sir——"

"I don't mean that," he interrupted.

"Do they seem a thoughtful crew?"

"Upon my word, sir," I replied, a good deal puzzled, "I really can't say."

"I have been wishing to deliver them a series of lectures on religious subjects, Mr. Lee, but am willing to consult you before I do so, because I am by nature a very sensitive man; and if there are any blasphemers or impious men forward, I should not like to subject myself to their jeers, although," he muttered, striking his hands together, "my misgiving shows a deplorably weak heart—a heart for which the noble apostolic example has done nothing, nothing!" and he stamped his foot heavily on the deck.

"I am flattered that you should think fit to consult me on this subject, sir," I answered, "but I should prefer not to give an opinion."

"Speak out!" he exclaimed angrily. "I

consult you as one of my officers, and I expect that you *will* give me an opinion."

" May I first ask," said I, pretty considerably taken aback, " what are the subjects you propose to lecture upon, sir ? "

His eyes lighted up, and he inclined his head towards me with an eager gesture.

" On the existence of spirits," he exclaimed in a low, very earnest voice. " I have twelve lectures by me on that subject, written by myself, in which I prove that the air we breathe is full of spirits. But understand, Mr. Lee, before the material eye is qualified to behold and the ear to hear these spirits, the heart must have faith ; and it is that faith I wish to impart to the ship's crew; if —if——" He wandered, as if in search of a word, and then stopped dead.

I thought this strange talk for a sea-captain to hold to his officer, more especially with a falling barometer below. How the dickens came this man to get command of a ship ? thought I ; and as I ran my eye over the noble fabric and thought of the number of lives over which he had as much control as any imperial despot, the signifiance of his craziness smote me violently.

"You have demanded an opinion from me, sir," said I, after waiting a few moments to see if he had anything more to say, and observing the look of abstraction in his eyes, "and I will give it: I don't think the men would understand your lectures, and indeed, considering the work they have to get through, and the rough, hard life of a forecastle, I don't think they would thank you for any sort of lectures. When on deck they ought to be at work, and when below they want to turn in."

That's blunt enough for him, anyhow, thought I, and the plain truth too.

"I was afraid so," he exclaimed, folding his arms. "And, after all, can we expect the vulgar and the uneducated to receive the light, when those who are cultivated and have minds to reason with refuse to heed it?"

"No sir," said I, "and that's why I think you would only be wasting time in trying to put ideas into the heads of the men yonder."

"I am afraid you are right, Mr. Lee, and I am obliged to you for your opinion." So saying, he was about to walk aft, when he

stopped and said, "Miss Maitland tells me you knew her before you joined this ship."

"I did, sir," I replied, colouring up a trifle and stealing a glance at Nelly, who, whilst pretending to listen to Mr. Black, was looking our way and evidently thinking of us.

"She is a charming person—a most intellectual woman," he exclaimed with great energy. "She seems thoroughly to understand my views, and one convert I am certain of."

I stared after him as he walked away, not taking any note (as Mr. Thomas might have sworn I did) of what he said about Nelly, but thinking over what should be done if his madness increased. Here we were only seven days out, and in that time I myself could see that his eccentric conduct and language were a great deal more pronounced than when in the Channel, though even then they were apparent enough to detain my attention. Whether the state of his mind was known to the men I had as yet had no means of ascertaining, and I was not going to commit so rash an act as to make inquiries among them; but I am now

persuaded that they suspected nothing neither at that nor at a much later time. The passengers, with the exception of Nelly, having been sick and confined to their cabins, would have had no opportunity of judging him ; indeed, if even Mr. Black were sharp enough to penetrate the truth, it would be necessary for the captain to converse with him about spirits and primitive Christianity, as he had conversed with me and Nelly on those subjects, before the Scotchman could arrive at any conclusion, and then would not he suppose that Captain Flanders was eccentric merely on these two points ? Madam Espinosa had not, in my judgment, sense enough to know a madman even when she saw one ; and the Spaniard as a foreigner, would accept everything as illustrative of the character of the British seaman. Hence, so far as I could judge, the secret was known to or suspected by myself and Nelly only ; for Mr. Thomas himself had as good as told me that he looked upon the skipper's talk as a mere trick to deceive and make fools of some of us. As I have said, I wondered over and over again how

any firm of employers could have entrusted command of a valuable ship to such a man. But so many causes operate in such matters that no conjecture can ever hit the exact truth. He might have an interest in the firm, or he was a connection of one of the partners, or maybe no suspicion that his mind was diseased was felt at the time when he was appointed. I had never a character for being curious, and in those careless young days I took things as they came, and never troubled myself to look into them. Hence I am unable to say more about Captain Flanders than what I can find in my recollection of him. Difficult as his character and manners are to convey by the pen—indeed, I may say I have found it impossible to approach in writing the impression my mind carries of him—I have thought proper to do my best with his story, that the reader may understand that travellers by sea are exposed to other perils than those which are contained in the stock hazards of tempest, fire, and mutiny.

Before I went below at four o'clock I noticed that the set of the swell, which had

been running all day steady from the westward, had veered right round to the northward, and had become heavier. This was a circumstance of such rare occurrence that in all my life I have only met two seamen who could recall a like experience. At the same time the wind hauled forward, blowing S.W. by S. This obliged me to brace the yards sharp up, and even then we were some points off our course. There was no appearance of dirty weather. The haze to the eastward had lifted and the sky was a bright blue, with a few rainy-looking clouds stretching across it, their shadows sailing in slate-coloured patches across the leaping waters. The pitching of the ship, however, made the decks extremely uncomfortable, and proved altogether too violent for poor Espinosa, whose chair capsized under him; he tumbled over in such a way that the tails of his dressing-gown got foul of his head, and away he rolled, like a man in a sack, until he was brought up by a hencoop, which he struck with a thump that set all the hens cackling in a fright. His wife laughed at him, but Nelly, with more humanity,

sprang forward to his assistance, and whilst she cleared his head of his gown, I got him on to his feet and led him back to his chair, which I fixed against the mizzen-mast, and secured by a turn with a rope's end.

I observed another fall in the mercury when I went below at four bells. This was the second dog-watch, and I was not disposed to lie down ; so, freshening myself up a bit with a hair-brush and a towel, I went on deck again, to be with Nelly if possible, that is, if the skipper left the poop, for, as I have said, I made a rule of keeping away from her when he was looking on. It was very warm and the breeze dropping fast, but there was quite enough wind to keep the sails full, though you could have told the decrease in the ship's speed by the *slopping* sound of the water alongside. Our decks looked as clean and smart as a man-of-war's, and all aloft taut, and the sails set, and the yards braced to a hair. No ship ever put to sea with a better boatswain than the one we had. With his silver whistle slung round his neck, his bronzed face peering between an enormous pair of bushy

whiskers, his great hairy arms ringed with bracelets and scored with crucifixes, stars, and other devices of that kind, bared to the elbows, his open shirt revealing his mossy breast and his full, muscular throat, the skin of which below the collar-rim was as fair as a woman's hand, Mr. Sinnet, the boatswain of the *Waldershare*, was a fine specimen of the English merchant sailor, with a voice like a hurricane, an eye for the minutest stain on the ship's deck, full of sympathy for sailors and their grievances, of which his mind held a catalogue as long as a mainyard, and a knack of keeping the men under him perpetually at work without "hazing" them, as the Yankees say.

In most ships all hands are employed on deck during the afternoon: this was the case in the *Waldershare*, and the crew knocked off work in the second dog-watch. All the men were now on deck, the boatswain leaning against his cabin door, smoking and yarning to the carpenter, who squatted on a bench in the doorway; the steward arranging with the cook about the cuddy dinner, in the galley, from the

chimney of which the smoke poured downwards, striking the water under the foot of the main-topmast staysail and blowing away on the top of the waves ; whilst on the forecastle the men hung in groups—here one of them putting a patch into an old pair of trousers, there another greasing his sea-boots, some listening whilst one read aloud from a fragment of an old newspaper, others conversing with short black pipes, the bowls of which were inverted, in their mouths, as they leaned over the forecastle rail watching the green water coiling away from the ship's side, hissing like a serpent as it ran aft. Now and then from the interior of the forecastle came the sound of the scraping of a fiddle. As I watched the man reading from the old bit of newspaper, I smiled to think that here we were sailing away from England and Europe, and that for months, perhaps, we should hear no news of what was going on there ; that in our absence kings might die, new constitutions be created, wars declared ; and that ashore all the people would be thinking what

wonderful times they lived in, and boasting of the changes which must make their period a famous one in history ; whereas we should come home and see no change anywhere, only a few more houses built, and some remembered faces missing, whilst the people still went about their work, and the sun looked down upon the same old scenes and interests. I suppose it is our vanity that causes us always to think *ours* the great age of change. But it makes the sailor laugh when he comes home to hear how much has happened and to see how little things have altered.

When dinner was served in the cuddy we all of us, including Espinosa, took our seats at the table, Mr. Thomas remaining on deck. I invariably noticed that the captain seemed easier in his manner when the chief mate was away, and this evening his talk—though, to be sure, he did not talk very much, after all—was so sensible, that I should have defied any one to suppose he was not in full possession of his faculties. He predicted that we should have a storm before twelve hours had passed, and said

that this heavy swell from the northwards was full of meaning to him. And then he related to Nelly his experience of a typhoon in the Bay of Bengal ; how, about an hour before sunset, the sky all away to the *eastward* was blood red, and the sea like an ocean of cochineal, and how this dreadful redness lasted till nearly midnight, during which time every one on board looked as if he had been painted over with vermillion, while the whole sea was on fire with phosphorus, and spread out like a vast surface of glass, licked underneath by long green and blue and white flames.

I had witnessed a spectacle much resembling this when becalmed off Antigua, and therefore knew he had not exaggerated in his description of it. Nelly, however, sometimes glanced at me, with a faint incredulous smile, as much as to say, “ Will, another hallucination, poor fellow ! ” yet for all that she listened to him with a great deal of interest. Indeed, he seemed to have hit the topic that suited his hollow face and glowing eyes when he talked of red skies and blue and green fires, and as

he went on in his deep voice, with Nelly listening to him, I thought of the Ancient Mariner and the Wedding Guest.

The cuddy being well aft, the pitch of the ship was felt in its full force; the bulkheads creaked furiously; the crockery in the steward's pantry rattled with an occasional smash; now and again might be heard the grind of the rudder, and the dull thunder of the swell as it struck the ship heavily under the counter; the swinging trays would plunge out of reach; plates滑ed fore and aft; knives and spoons tumbled into one's lap or on to the deck with a clatter, and I had to calculate the moment when to lift a fork to my mouth, in order that I might not drive it into my eye or my ear. In short, everything that wasn't lashed fetched away; and, among other things, Mr. Black, against whose chair a sudden lurch had propelled the steward, and over they both toppled, dragging the table-cloth half off with them. The Scotchman crawled on his hands and knees into his cabin, and shutting the door upon himself with a loud slam, gave vent to his

feelings in an uproar that instantly *did* for poor Espinosa, who, though eating nothing, had been manfully holding on to the table and giving battle to his nausea, as we most of us saw by his rolling eyes ; but the moment he heard Mr. Black, then, as a war-horse pricks his ears to the notes of a trumpet, he started up with a convulsed face, slued around with outstretched wandering hands, and dashed, or rather fell, headlong into his cabin, where he was presently followed by his wife, who for some minutes had been sitting with a handkerchief stuffed into her mouth.

" I should like to go on deck," said Nelly, looking very pale ; and really, the sounds which now issued from the cabins, to right and left, might have disordered the stomach of a whaling captain. In a moment the skipper got up and offered her his arm, and after lingering a few moments to swallow a glass of sherry, I followed them.

The wind was fast dying away, and the sun was going down into a bed of clouds that had risen whilst we sat at dinner. The captain had handed Nelly to a chair, and I

noticed him standing at the wheel, looking steadily into the west, as a man might who had reason to know that something was to be expected from that quarter. "After all," thought I, "if he has not his wits about him, he has enough to relieve those under him from much anxiety." Mr. Thomas had vanished, and looking through the skylight, I saw him eating away heartily with his arms squared, deaf to the complaining sounds in the cabins. I asked Nelly how she felt.

"Quite well again. I am always well in the air."

"The sun looks angry, doesn't he?"

"And beautiful too. See those lovely colours streaking the upper portion of the clouds there."

"I am glad to find the captain looking at the horizon with a rational eye. He seemed as sound as an oyster-shell at dinner."

"Yes, he did," she answered; "but he is *not* sound, Will. As he led me on deck, he said that a spirit had told him we were going to have a storm."

"God help him, then," said I. "I give him up after that." I left her with something like a feeling of real disappointment. I had quite hoped I had exaggerated his craziness, but this piece of information threw me all aback again, and maybe I was now disposed to think him madder than he was.

The clouds in the west were fast growing into a magnificent spectacle as they rolled slowly up to meet the sun, that was sinking towards them. As yet they were detached, though they stretched the whole length of the western horizon; but just below them was a solid, motionless line, so exactly resembling a coast, that it was impossible to see it and not for the moment believe it land. It was of a livid colour, as though the great vaporous masses of front cloud obstructed the light of the sun from it, and against it the horizontal swell ran in outlines, like dark-green hills, whilst on the hither side of these running liquid lines, the sea caught the red light of the sun and shattered it into fragments of lurid crimson, which it seemed to hurl right and left upon

its surface. All the edges of the upper clouds directly looking up to the sun were tinged with a deep crimson border, that faded into amber as it crept towards the centre; and this rich colour was again followed further down by a kind of yellow brightness, like the sheen of pale gold, but the centre and the skirts of the clouds were dark, graduating from slate into a livid gloom, corresponding with the motionless range behind. I never witnessed a grander, nor, indeed, a more awful sunset, nor beheld at once so great a number of rich, defined colours; for it must be remembered that on either hand of the sun the clouds, as they stretched to the north and the south, gathered a variety of lovely tints, so that even the remotest clouds had a pink effulgence in them, mixed with pearl and delicate orange, whilst the sea all to starboard was equally full of colour, being a lively green near the ship, but as full of shifting hues as the dolphin until it reached the great stretch of dull reddish light thrown down upon it by the sun, and which the waves, as I have said, tore into fragments,

and tossed on their summits as though flames were running up through the surface of the sea out of the depths of it. It was strange that the captain should have pictured much such a scene as this at the dinner-table, though he could not know that it might be seen by going on deck, as all this splendour had gathered whilst we sat in the cuddy. Did it portend a cyclone? We might hope that we were scarcely far enough south for that kind of gale, the very worst a ship can encounter.

The men forward seemed fascinated by the sunset, and stood looking at it in a crowd on the starboard side of the forecastle. We had all plain sail set, and the starboard studding-sail booms rigged out. Suddenly the wind utterly failed, and the canvas pealed against the masts and rigging with reports like the discharge of a hundred small fire-arms. Mr. Thomas was now on deck, looking at the sunset.

"There's a gale of wind there," said he, "but we shan't have it yet; the rain must come first."

"Get those stun'sail booms rigged in!"

sung out the skipper, “ and clew the royals up and furl them.”

The necessary orders were given, and the light canvas melted in the calm blue overhead, like summer clouds in the eye of the morning sun.

“ Haul down the flying jib, and send some hands aft to stow the crossjack ! ”

“ Hillo ! ” thought I, “ the spirits are growing nervous.”

“ A sail on the starboard beam ! ” shouted a voice from the main-topmast cross-trees.

“ What does she look like ? ” bawled Mr. Thomas.

“ Why, like a glob o’ blood, sir.”

“ Mr. Lee,” exclaimed the captain, “ take the glass with you into the maintop and see what you can make of her.”

I fetched the glass, sprang into the main rigging, and gained the top. I steadied the glass in the top-gallant rigging, but the ship was rolling so abominably, that it took me some minutes to fix the vessel. I then found that nothing below her topsail yards was visible. So I clambered up to the cross-trees, and from this elevation she was

distinct enough. The swell on the horizon sometimes hid her, but I soon had my report ready.

"She's a small barque, sir, snugged right away down to her topsails, which are close-reefed; and they're either reefing or furling her foresail, and she's pitching as I never before saw any vessel pitch!" I bellowed, making my voice reach the deck with extreme difficulty, for the canvas was rattling about me as if a lot of nine-pounders were being discharged all around in the air.

"That'll do, Mr. Lee!" shouted the chief mate. "Lay down, sir!"

However, I stayed a minute or two to look around me. The view of the sunset was not half so fine up here as from the deck, owing to my being able to see from my elevation a very tall breadth of the bank of livid cloud below the illuminated masses; but the tumbling sea, along which the heavy swell was rolling, the tops of which, burnished by the sultry calm that had fallen, were lucent with the red western glare, whilst in their hollows the deep violet shadows strongly defined the movements

of the sea to my eye, looking down from my great altitude, presented a grand scene, in the midst of which lay the long, narrow hull of the *Waldershare*, plunging heavily, shattering the water in foam all about her stem as her counter came chopping down into it, while her decks shone with the red light that fell slanting from the west, and red fires gleamed in the glass of the skylights and in every piece of brass, and her people looked like pygmies.

“Clew up the top-gallant sails,” I heard the skipper sing out as I dropped over the futtock-shrouds into the main rigging; and as I alighted on the top of the bulwark, Mr. Thomas called to the boatswain to pipe all hands to shorten sail. I thought this a sensible move on the part of the skipper. All hands were on deck, it is true, but only the watch were doing the work; by snugging down whilst there was daylight, and putting all the men to work while they were on deck, would save a deal of trouble later on, and was an order sure to please the crew. The clear notes of the boatswain’s pipe echoed high above the heavy flogging of

the canvas, and in a few minutes both watches were hard at work, letting go halliards, hauling out reef-tackles and running out along the yards. We had enough hands to reef all three topsails at once when there was no wind, and soon the men were on the yards passing the earrings and knotting the reef-points. The usual conditions of reefing were wanting in this instance—the ship flying through the water, the gale ringing through the rigging, the water hissing and boiling around her, the pealing canvas bending the spars like withes, and wringing the very mast-coats off the decks; nevertheless, there was noise, and even excitement enough, for on each yard the spirit of rivalry ruled strong. Each gang wanted to be the first done, and it was a lively sight to see them come tumbling off the yards into the tops, and sliding down the backstays, or dropping down the rigging to be first at the halliards, and singing out before the others should be down from aloft.

By the time the topsail halliards were belayed the sun had gone, the advanced

clouds had lost their glory and, merged into the solid wall behind, stood up to a great height in the sky, which was of a sickly red that extended far into the east, where it became a sort of ash-colour. I never remember beholding a more portentous aspect of the heavens. The red haze had faded out of the air, the sea was rapidly growing dark, and the night was closing in fast. There was not a breath of air, the atmosphere was oppressively hot, and we felt it the more now that there was no canvas to fan the decks. With the exception of the three close-reefed topsails, the foresail (that was hauled close up to the yard), and the fore-topmast staysail, the vessel had not a rag of canvas showing, and she looked as forlorn as poor Espinosa in his silk drawers, as she rolled her naked spars to and fro, to and fro, under the lurid and threatening sky. Having no steerage-way, she had fallen off, and the swell was right abeam, with the black cloud-bank astern; but luckily within the last hour the swell had considerably moderated, and the ship in consequence was a good deal more

habitable, though it was still difficult to keep one's footing without holding on with the hands.

"We're snug enough now, any way," said Mr. Thomas to me, pulling his hair over his ears and smoothing down his waistcoat. "But we shall be soaked first before the wind comes to dry us. Hillo! that was a bright flash! Gad! that looked typhoonish, Mr. Lee!" He was gazing astern as he spoke, and I forward; but though I had not seen the flash where it leapt, I judged its ferocity by the brilliant greenish glare that filled the whole of the sky.

"The skipper seems to know what he's about," said I.

"Why, yes," he answered, shortly.

"I think he got an idea from that vessel to windward."

"Very likely. I heartily wish the voyage were over," he exclaimed, pettishly. "It's the most uncomfortable berth I ever filled. Neither as third, second, nor chief mate have I ever before been thrown with a skipper who eyes me when I speak to him as if he would like to cut my throat."

"I confess I don't understand him," said I.

"It's not good form for officers to discuss their captain, I know," said he; "but when you've got a skipper like Captain Flanders to deal with, what can a fellow do but cruise round and round him. He never consults me; he never seems to like me to speak to him. Does he think I don't know my work? Would he like to make out that it's three turns round the long-boat and a pull at the scuttle-butt with me? If he lets the men get that notion into their heads, I may as well go below for the rest of the voyage."

"I don't believe he's responsible for all he does," I answered. "What do you think of his telling Miss Maitland that a spirit warned him a storm was coming?"

"Ay, ay, he's a plaguey good hand at spirits: but take care that he isn't tomfooling us with his damned ghosts. Longshore dodges to get officers into a hole are pretty common nowadays, I've heard. You'll never make me think he believes in what he says."

I could not help smiling at this notion ; at the same time I felt sorry for my little shipmate. There was no doubt he had good reason to dislike the skipper, who made a point of treating him with great rudeness, never addressing him at meal-times, nor conversing with him on deck, and barely giving him civil words when spoken to by him ; but much of his resentment sprung from disappointment. I believe he had counted upon getting command of the *Waldershare* this voyage, and it was undoubtedly mortifying to a man who had been in the service of the owners of the ship for some years, to find a stranger chosen out of another employ and put over him. However, he had let fall one hint that I made up my mind should profit me, when he said it was bad form for officers to discuss their skipper. We had opened ourselves too much as it was, and apart from all instinct of discipline and respect, I considered that I might criticize Captain Flanders once too often, and so get professionally ruined ; for, whether mad or not, he was captain, and could do what he liked

aboard his own ship—break me and send me forward to work with the men, or clap me in irons in a cabin under lock and key.

It was now eight bells, and my watch on deck. There had been no more lightning, but it was very dark, with a most curious red haze in the north, so deceptive that one only saw it fitfully and by looking at the sky to the east and west of it. There came a few languid stars into the south, but sea and sky were as black as ink astern; not a breath of air, the swell greatly fallen, and the sea alongside like ink, with a few tremulous green fires shooting out into it when the vessel rolled.

All this time Nelly had remained on deck. The captain being away, I went over to her, not having had a chance to speak to her before.

"I see we are going to have a storm, Will. How fearfully dark it is! Did you see that great blaze of lightning about half an hour ago? The whole sky seemed to open."

"Well, you are not frightened?"

"A little—when it lightened; but I was

more frightened to see you go up the rigging. I held my breath, and my eyes swam in watching you."

"If a sailor can't climb he's of no use, Nelly. But see how heavily the dew falls. Look at the lamplight glistening on the arm of this chair. It is too damp for you to remain on deck. Besides, the cuddy is more cheerful than this sky and sea. Don't let either lightning, thunder, or wind frighten you. Things which are really dangerous make very little noise as a rule."

She rose; it was very dark. I pressed her to my heart and kissed her; it was the first kiss between us for a long while. She was very reluctant to leave me, but I led her to the companion, and pressing my hand, she went below.

I crossed over to see how the ship's head lay; and as I raised my eyes from the compass card the whole sky was torn from horizon to horizon by a terrific flash of lightning. It was as desperate a flash as ever I remember seeing. It was like a mighty lance of blue flame hurled sheer

across the sky, vanishing into the eastern heaven ; and the whole surface of the ocean glanced in the horrid glare like a spectral world issuing out of chaos. I closed my eyes, but so frightfully vivid had been the blaze, that when I opened them the darkness was intense. I was temporarily blinded ; I could not even see the card that lay illuminated by the binnacle lamp. There was a solemn, hollow, distant peal of thunder ; I was surprised by the smallness of it in comparison with the magnitude of the flash. “I never see the like of that before, sir,” exclaimed the man who stood at the wheel, steadying the spokes with his elbow whilst he rubbed his eyes. All was as still as the grave again ; not a sound could be heard but the sobbing gurgle of the water washing under the counter, with the flap of the invisible canvas aloft. Captain Flanders came up to where I stood.

“I don’t like the look of this at all,” said he, in a voice the deep notes of which were amazingly in keeping with the profound darkness. “Better get the mizzen-topsail furled whilst it’s calm.”

I gave the necessary orders in a low voice, and the watch came aft, groping their way, and after a bit clewed the sail up, but without singing, and went aloft. Presently they came down, all as quiet as possible, and went forward, and the decks were silent again. The galley was locked for the night, and the only light forward was the haze thrown by the light in the boatswain's berth ; aft, the cuddy lamps glimmered on the skylights, and the binnacle diffused a little circle of soft radiance, that fell in a delicate haze upon the wheel and the motionless figure standing at it. The skipper walked to and fro quietly ; I went forward to the break of the poop and hung over the side, watching the strange shapes of green and blue fire that flickered and coiled through the water, sometimes resembling serpents chasing invisible prey, sometimes twisting into forms like trees. All overhead was a ponderous darkness full of dreadful silence ; the stars in the east had vanished, and it was now impossible to tell the point in the sky which the front line of the great cloud-bank had reached.

Presently a few large drops of rain fell ; they struck the deck heavily and were as hot as blood upon the hand ; they ceased, but I thought I might as well take the hint they gave, and slipped into my cabin as fast as my legs would carry me for my oilskins.

Phew ! the cabin was stifling hot and the smell of the oilskins sickening. There was no one in the cuddy, and I hoped Nelly had gone to bed. Let her sleep now while she could ; for the barometer—a wiser spirit than the captain's familiar, was prophesying weather that would waken the sleepers presently.

Just as my foot touched the poop-ladder, there was another flash of lightning, as blinding as the one I have just described, and it fell from right overhead ; the air was filled with a strong sulphureous smell ; the electric fluid ran down the ties, chain sheets, and along the jackstays, and they looked as though they were on fire ; some one cried out, but in what part of the ship I could not tell. I believed that we had been struck, and bounded on to the poop, and

then came a crash of thunder, after an interval of not more than three seconds, worthy of the terrific blaze that had preceded it. I thought it would never cease; it went booming along the glassy sea as though it were some enduring sound rushing from horizon to horizon. The captain was standing at the head of the port poop-ladder, and as I came up he shouted out, "Forward there! is any one hurt?"

There was a few moments' silence, and a man answered, "There's no one hurt here, sir."

"This is frightful," said he, coming over to where I stood, and in the reflection of the cuddy lamplight I saw him remove his hat and wipe his forehead. "Did you hear a cry just now?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, you did!" he exclaimed in a tone of relief. "I was afraid I might have been the only one who heard it."

"Some one sung out in fright, I suppose, sir."

"No doubt. I wish something would happen to change this dreadful darkness

and silence. "How's her head?" he called out.

No answer came from the wheel.

"Wheel there, I say!" he shouted; "how's her head now?"

"Has he fallen asleep?" I exclaimed, and went aft. "Why don't you answer?" I said, addressing the man, who stood erect, holding on to the spokes with both hands. "Didn't you hear the captain hail you?"

Finding him still silent, I lost my patience, though I wondered that any man should sleep in that erect posture, and I shook him by the arm. He retained his grip of the wheel, but neither moved nor spoke.

"Why, what's the matter with him?" exclaimed the captain, who had followed me. "Pull the lamp out of the binnacle and look at his face."

The lamp thus exposed cast a brilliant light, and I threw it full upon the man's face.

"Merciful God!" I cried.

The lips of the man were drawn tight back into a dreadful smile, laying bare his gums and teeth; his eyeballs were turned

right up into his head, and nothing was visible but the whites of them.

"The last flash has killed him!" I exclaimed, recoiling with a shudder from the terrible sight, and I replaced the lamp in the binnacle.

Scarcely had I done this when down came the rain. It fell just as if the whole ocean had come aboard. It plumped upon us in a sheet, beating me on to my knees with the weight of it, and in an instant the poop was awash, and I could hear the torrent sluicing through the scupper holes, whilst the sea lay white and hissing around. The captain appeared helpless—he neither moved nor spoke. The suddenness of this discovery had made him quite vacant.

With a dead man at the wheel, whose grip of the spokes was not to be shaken off, the ship was doomed if the gale burst suddenly upon us. I sprang forward and at the top of my voice roared out, "Lay aft, here, men! aft here for your lives!" and then ran back again to the wheel, where, seizing hold of the dead man's fingers, I succeeded by sheer force in opening them, whereupon the body

fell heavily on to the deck. It was wrestling with a corpse; but with a corpse in which one would have said the English spirit of faithful duty lingered even after the spirit had fled. Never shall I forget the touch of those wiry, dead fingers, the grip as tough as steel, the snap of the bones as I tore open the fingers, and the body falling with a *thud* that sounded above the thunder of the rain upon the hollow deck.

The whole of the starboard watch came splashing aft, dashing the water from the deck with their feet as they ran.

"Lanyon has been struck dead by the lightning," I sang out. "Lay hold of the wheel, one of you, and the rest carry his body forward and lay him in the forehold, with a tarpaulin over him."

They stood wondering and alarmed a moment, then one of them laid hold of the wheel, and others picked up the body and away they went, whilst the rain fell in a broad sheet and the sea all about us sobbed under it. I saw by the binnacle light that the captain was ploughed through with the rain: his hat was sheer pulp, and fallen all

on one side, and his feet squelched in his boots as he moved.

All on a sudden the rain ceased, just as you might stop a shower-bath. A little air came blowing from the south.

"We're aback, sir!" I shouted.

"Hard aport!" he exclaimed. "Round with the after-yards."

But before I could sing out, the light air died and the main-topsail flapped heavily.

"Hold on all, is it, sir?"

"Ay, but we shall have it in a minute. Look astern!"

I did so, and beheld once more the faint reddish light in the sky, which gave me almost a shock to behold, for the like of it I had never witnessed amid such a darkness as now surrounded us. But under this sky was the sight the captain had bid me look at; it was a long luminous line of a colour, or character rather, it would be useless for me to attempt to express; but what it most resembled was a nebulous haze, or the tail of a comet, the hue extremely ghastly, as though it were a wall of spume illuminated by blue-light, or a long high reach of foam

filled with shooting phosphorescent fires. It broadened and came rushing down upon us with incredible swiftness. Some moments before it reached us I heard the roar of it sounding through the silence about us, which nothing on this side disturbed but the flapping of our canvas.

“Hands by the topsail sheets!” shouted the skipper, his voice rising almost into a shriek; but before the words were well out of his mouth, the sea was all in foam on either side of us, and the furious blast was yelling in our ears. I toppled down before it for all the world as if I had been skating and my feet had滑ed away astern of me; and I suppose I was blown a dozen feet along the slippery deck before I brought myself up. The white water filled the air with a kind of light, and I saw the skipper flat on his buttocks. He did not attempt to rise, but howled out, “Another hand aft to the wheel!” and I delivered the command, though jammed by the wind so hard against the brass rail of the poop that I could scarcely muster breath enough to echo him. The force of the wind was

beyond all reach of words. I saw one of the men come aft in response to the order, and all was well with him until he got to the top of the poop-ladder; then the gale took him, and blew him head over heels on to the quarter-deck again, where he alighted with a splash, for that deck was still afloat with the rain. However, he was not hurt, but tried again, and reached the poop flat on his breast, and in this manner crawled aft like a worm.

Looking astern it was not possible to breathe. The wind blew one flat. It hit me in the stomach like a strong fist and stopped there, and there was no relief until the back was turned to it. Its bellowing was as if a thousand wild bulls were being swept through the air and roaring in rage as they went; and this was a sound that rose high above, and had no relation to the sweeping shrieks in the rigging and among the spars. The sky was full of this tremendous bellowing, and it was one of the most terrifying incidents of the storm. No such sound is ever heard ashore: what one hears there is the groaning of wind in

the chimney-pots and amidst trees, or its plaintive cries as it rushes down the mountain sides and howls along the valley ; but all these various sounds have no resemblance to the roaring noise that such a wind as I am describing makes at sea. The ocean was a complete surface of foam ; under the black sky it lay like a land covered with snow ; the hurl of the gale had flattened the very swell, and along the hissing surface rushed the *Waldershare* with half her bowsprit under water, as though the wind would drive her bow under, but as steady as a sleigh speeding along a level Canadian tract.

Could this be a cyclone ? It had all the taste and fury of one. Neither the captain nor the chief mate had expected the gale for twelve hours, yet here it was full on us and the first watch not over. I tried to crawl aft to see how her head lay, but though I was on my hands and feet it took me all five minutes to get the length of the poop ; for the wind was like the hands of a giant on my shoulders, forcing me down and back, and the foam was flying over the stern of

the ship as thick as a fog, and laced my face as though some one were slashing me with a whip.

The ship's head was due south ; the skipper still squatted under the lee of the grating abaft the wheel, and I had to get hold of the grating on the port side to prevent myself from being blown forward. Indeed, right aft where I now was the full fury of the wind was felt ; it seemed strong enough to blow the ship out of water, and yet, whatever the wind's speed might have been, the ship was rushing forward at not less than fourteen knots ; and so I leave you to guess what the force of the gale was at this time when I say that, though our own pace was taking fourteen knots out of its volume, its power was great enough to lift a man off his legs and blow him forward as though he were a piece of paper.

If this were a circular storm—and there was no reason to doubt it was—there were two ways of dealing with it ; one was by avoiding the dangerous centre, and the other by heaving to on the right tack and letting the wind blow itself away. If the

rules laid down for this sort of gales were correct, then the centre of the cyclone should bear about E.; and that this was a cyclone was presently shown by the ship's head gradually revolving as we ran, so that, being dead before it, we were now steering S. by E. half E. We were well within the outer radius of it, and keeping our yards square would sail us round and round in it like a ship on the edge of a whirlpool.

The skipper got on to his feet and came over to the compass; he had been dismasted of his hat, and his hair blew out in a straight line. He thrust his head down to look at the card, made an ineffectual attempt to look astern, and then bawled out, "We must heave the ship to, sir. Call all hands and get the foresail and fore- topsail furled, and haul down the fore-topmast staysail."

I let go the grating, and the wind ran me forward like an arrow; the sea was now beginning to rise, and the heads of the waves on either side blew sheer off and over the bulwarks, and met in the air with flashes; they looked like darts of blue fire

streaming through the darkness. I went forward shouting out the orders, and presently the shriek of the boatswain's pipe mingled with the bellowing overhead. I stood on the forecastle while the men went aloft. It took the whole strength of the ship's company to furl each sail. The canvas stood up above the yard like a stone wall, but it must yield at last, and I heard with a feeling of relief the chorus raised by the men as they triced up the bunt of the topsail. Whilst they were hauling down the staysail I took a look aft, being well under the lee of the foremast, that somewhat broke the fury of the wind. Though it was as black as ink overhead, not a cloud-break visible, yet, as I have said, the boiling water made a light in the air, and the outline of the ship and her spars, as high as her top-gallant yards, could be clearly made out. To right and left of her, and sheer over her stern, the water was flying like smoke, and great lumps of foam as they fell on her deck gleamed and winked like glow-worms. The ship in the unearthly light looked spectral, a wild, flying, and torn shape, her

narrow band of close-reefed topsail—the only fragment of canvas showing—glimmering overhead, and her dark outline plain upon the pale spume. There was a storm and thunder of foam under her bows, for she was piling the water as high as her cat-heads, and pitching heavily to the sea, that was now waxing furious.

“Lay aft here and man the port main-braces!” pealed the voice of the captain; and we all tumbled aft, wrestling with the wind as we went, and catching hold of whatever came in our way to haul ourselves along. The helm was put down as the mainyards were braced sharp up, and the vessel came round, shipping one heavy sea as she did so, which filled the decks with a smother of froth, whilst it was up to the men’s knees in the lee scuppers. The fore and mizzen yards were braced hard up against the weather rigging, and the ship was now hove to on the starboard tack, plunging heavily over the seas, which came rolling in small mountains down upon her, and sometimes so burying herself to leeward that the end of the fore-topmast stud-

ding-sail boom now and again harpooned the water.

“ Go below the port watch ! ” was now the cry, for there was nothing more to be done.

CHAPTER VII.

LANYON'S BURIAL.

WE might have imagined that the gale had reached its utmost fury almost as soon as it fell upon us, but by midnight it was blowing a dozen hurricanes in one, with a heavy Atlantic sea running. It was no longer pitch dark, though the sky looked all one cloud, and there was no more lightning. The fall of the barometer had been from 29.80 to 27.60, a total fall of 2.20 ! Shortly after midnight there was a rise.

Meanwhile the *Waldershare* breasted the sea nobly, considering that she was loaden down to within a few inches of her chain-plate bolts, and could we have lightened her I believe that she would have danced over the very spray in the air, and have kept her decks dry through the gale. But

how can any ship that is loaded flush with the mainhold with hardware and metal rails act well? The seas poured over her before she could rise to them; forward she was like a pier-head, so stiff and obstinate did the dead weight in her make her; and the water swept over her forecastle in whole seas, and ran up her sides in columns as high as her main-top, where the wind overmastered them and blew them right across the decks and a hundred fathoms beyond in a veil of smoke.

I went below at midnight dead tired. I stood a few moments under the break of the poop to exchange a few words with Mr. Thomas, for there was no chance of making oneself heard anywhere else. He said he was afraid that the cargo was straining the ship severely, but that she was magnificently built, with a wonderful deal of life in her, and further, he believed that the gale would soon blow itself out, for, from the sudden rise in the barometer, he inferred that we were only just inside the outermost line of the storm-circle, and that our being hove to would bring us out of it shortly.

I asked him if he did not think the captain had shown judgment in the manner in which he had made ready for this storm, and in which he had handled the ship since? He said, "Yes, he could not have done more," and then went on to the poop.

A decanter of rum swung on one of the trays, and I took a wine-glass and helped myself to a dram before entering my cabin. The motion of the ship was felt more in the cuddy than on the poop. On deck the excitement inspired by the bellowing of the gale, the yelling of the rigging, the thunder of the seas as they burst over the ship, took one's thoughts away from her motion; and the violent uproar around was, so to speak, independent of her pitching and rolling. But in the cuddy it was different; here every sound was caused by the motion, or nearly so, and one's attention was directed to it. The groaning and creaking of the bulkheads, the shake and rattle of the cabin doors, the long-drawn grating of the straining timbers, coupled with the hollow thunder of the seas as they struck the ship outside or fell in tons' weight on her decks, filled

the ear with an uproar that I am not ashamed to confess even disturbed my own seasoned mind with a subdued sense of dismay, whilst the trays depending from the upper deck swung to an angle of forty-five degrees and sometimes more, and the planks underfoot滑ed away from one's toes as though they meant to leave one floating in the air.

With my back firmly planted against the table, I swigged off my dram of rum, and had just replaced the glass when the door of the cabin occupied by the Espinosas flew open, and the Spaniard whisked through it as if fired from a cannon. He struck the table heavily, and vanished under it. I was afraid that he had seriously hurt himself, for it was evident that he had only intended to open the door with the intention of seeing if anybody was about, and that he had been thrown headlong by the lurch of the ship. He rolled under the table against my legs. I lifted him up groaning, and set him against Mr. Black's door, where I "fixed" him by grasping his shoulders with both hands, otherwise he

would have fallen again. He was in his dressing-gown, but his head and feet were bare.

"I hope you are not hurt," said I. "Why have you left your cabin? You are much better in it."

He rolled his eyes about and made some answer in Spanish, which of course I did not understand.

"Let me tell you," said I, shouting in his ear, "that the ship is in no danger. A heavy gale is blowing, but she is snug as good seamanship can make her, and well watched; and if that don't satisfy you, Mister Espinosa, I'll be hanged if I know what will. Here, let me put you into your cabin again."

Just as I pronounced these words Mr. Black turned the handle of his door; the door opened inside. My whole weight was against Espinosa in order to keep him in his place, and his back was pressed against Mr. Black's cabin door; consequently, when the door was opened, we both pitched into the cabin, I on top of the Spaniard, who, to save himself, caught hold of Mr. Black's

legs, and down he came ; and there we all three of us floundered, grabbing at one another in such a manner as to prevent ourselves from rising, whilst my streaming oilskins soaked my fellow-strugglers through and through.

"What the deil's *this!*" roared Mr. Black, in a voice *deep* with fright. "Let go of my leg, for God's sake ! Dom it ! the man's nipping me with a pair of scissors !"

This must have been Espinosa's fingernails, for the truth was (I hope my blushes will be excused) Mr. Black had nothing on him but a night-shirt and a pocket-handkerchief tied around his head, the ends meeting under his chin. Here the ship lurched heavily to windward, and away the three of us rolled, then down again to leeward, until she seemed almost on her beam ends, and off we started afresh. Releasing myself from Mr. Black's embraces—for he had got his arm most lovingly and tenaciously coiled around my neck—I staggered on to my feet, and catching hold of the Spaniard's claws, unshackled them from Mr. Black's leg. No

sooner was the Scotchman erect than he sprang into his bunk, with the back of his shirt hanging in two rags from his shoulders, and hauling the sheet over him began to parley with me from his pillow.

"What is the meaning of this intrusion, Mr. Lee?" he shouted. "What business have you and that—that wretched foreigner in my cabin, sir? Here is my leg bleeding like a pig with his cursed scratches!" and he forked a stout peg out of bed, and pointed to half a dozen long red lines along his shin.

"We were talking against your cabin door, and you opened it and we tumbled in," I answered, like to suffocate with laughter over this silly business. "I hope you are not hurt by this unfortunate accident, Mr. Espinosa?"

"Hurt!" cried Mr. Black; "I wish he had broken his dom'd neck for tearing the flesh off my bones! Can't a passenger open his door without a couple of boobies bursting into his cabin and skeening him alive, eh? Answer me that for yoursel', you Meester Spaniard!" And wrapped up as his head

was, he glared on Mr. Espinosa like an infuriate old witch.

"What you call my neck, eh?" suddenly shrieked Espinosa, greatly to my surprise, for I had thought him half-stunned. "Who are you yourself, you beeg ogly rascal, eh? who are you yourself—answer me dat!" and skipping up to Mr. Black, he snapped his fingers under his nose in an ecstasy of passion.

This was more than I could bear; so, leaving the two passengers to settle their own quarrel, I bolted out of the cabin, threw off my boots and oilskins, and pitched myself on to my mattress, where I lay laughing until I fell asleep.

The gale proved but a short-lived one after all, though, judging of its central force by the taste we had of its outer limit, I should imagine that had the ship been a few leagues further to the eastward when the storm burst upon her, she would have foundered. That it was a rotatory storm was proved by the sudden shifts of wind veering from N. to E.N.E., but without any regularity, blowing first great guns from

one point and then thundering down upon the ship from another. When I went on deck, at four o'clock in the morning, there was a tremendous sea running, but the gale was fast blowing itself out; the clouds lay in fragments overhead and sailed slowly across the sky, while among them the stars flashed with a sharp, tremulous glittering, showing that above the lower stratum of cloud was a range of high, small, frost-white cloud that was passing away to the westwards, right athwart the path of the gale.

The sickly dawn broke upon a dismal scene. The ship had as strained and battered a look as if she had been tumbling about in a gale of wind for a month; the foresail and fore-topsail had been furled anyhow in the dark, and lay on the yards in lumps of canvas, kept in their places by the hastily passed gaskets; all the running rigging was blowing away to leeward in semicircles; the main-deck was like a pond, and with every roll of the ship the water rushed from side to side, dashing against the bulwarks and smothering everything in foam; the top-gallant forecastle was all awash, the

green water toppling on to it and pouring in cascades on to the deck below ; no sail being set forward, the ship all that way looked naked, and her long bowsprit and jibbooms forking out, danced their black outline up and down the sky.

By six o'clock the gale, blowing right from the east, had so far decreased that I was able to set the close-reefed fore-topsail and storm trysail ; this extra canvas steadied her amazingly, but though she was ratching somewhat now, I kept her close to meet the sea, albeit had we headed our course we should have carried the gale on her port quarter.

By seven o'clock it was blowing a moderate gale and the sea had greatly fallen ; so we squared away the yards and made sail, and presently the ship was swirling through it with a top-gallant sail set over a single-reefed topsail, heaping the water ahead of her as high as the hawser-holes, whilst the foam poured over the spritsail yard.

The watch now turned to to clear up the decks and wash down. This was a job the ship wanted badly, for nothing makes a

greater mess aboard a vessel than a gale of wind. By breakfast-time the ship was clean and taut fore and aft, her decks drying fast in the sun, the hens cackling cheerfully in their coops, the pigs grunting under the long-boat, the reefs shaken out, the main-royal set, the sea fast going down, and a piebald sky with a lacing of glorious blue over the mastheads.

After breakfast I stood under the poop-break smoking a pipe ; presently Mr. Black came on to the quarter-deck, looking very yellow, and asked me how I did after last night's rough work. I thought this mighty civil after the disturbance in his cabin—indeed, I had every moment been expecting a summons from the captain, to whom I made sure the Scotchman would complain. He then said he thought an apology due to me for the rude manner in which he had spoken last night ; he had found out from Espinosa's explanation that the fault was not mine ; he had opened the door, having heard my voice and wishing to ask some questions about the storm, and we had tumbled in ; but he had made peace with Espinosa, though he was

still of opinion that the Spaniard had clawed him out of malice. However, he had clapped some plaster on his leg and lost the pain, and as he believed it was an accident not likely to happen again, he wanted no fuss made over it. So there was an end of the matter, and I was saved the trouble of explaining to the captain. Mr. Black did not tell me how Espinosa and he had made up their quarrel. I had run out when the Spaniard had snapped his fingers under Mr. Black's nose, and could only suppose that the insult would have led to a pummelling match. A set-to may, indeed, have taken place; though it is more likely they begged each other's pardon when my back was turned, for what with the gale and the groaning of the ship, and being drenched with my oilskins, and rolled upon the deck, they were both nearly frightened out of their wits.

I was still lingering in the sheltered part of the deck I had chosen, my pipe in my mouth, very often glancing into the cuddy, on the look-out for Nelly, who had not left her cabin, when I saw Mr. Thomas go for-

ward. The watch had just been setting the fore-topmast studding-sail, and the men who had been rigging out the boom were coming leisurely down the rigging. It was at this moment that I all on a sudden remembered the death of the seaman last night by lightning, a circumstance of which the gale appeared to have swept the memory clean out of my head, so inveterate is the sailor's heedlessness, and his knack of forgetting in five minutes events which would score the mind of the landsman with life-long impressions.

I instinctively guessed the chief mate's errand, and I was quite right, for as he came back he stopped to tell me "that poor devil Lanyon is to be buried at two bells" (meaning nine o'clock). I looked at my watch, and found it wanted only twenty minutes of that time. "It is the captain's fancy, though I think he might as well have waited until eight bells, when all hands will be on deck;" and so saying, he passed on.

A funeral is always a solemn thing at sea. It is not that sailors think so much of the death of a messmate, as that a familiar face

is missing ; there will be one voice the less to join in the chorus at the halliards ; his gruff voice and laugh will be heard no more ; his pipe lies broken on the deck, and is extinguished ; his bunk is empty, though there is his name carved on the massive beam over it. Bill is gone, and the watch he belonged to is weaker by a hand. Though Lanyon had been in my watch I had never noticed anything particular in him ; he was a fair average seaman and no more ; but I believe he was popular in the forecastle as being a good-tempered man, always ready to oblige a shipmate with a friendly draw of his pipe, or a loan of any of the old rags of breeches and shirts which make up poor mercantile Jack's wardrobe, and his death had impressed the men, though the moment he was overboard he would be forgotten.

At nine o'clock the boatswain tuned up his pipe, the captain came down on the quarter-deck, the chief mate remained on the poop to look after the ship, none of the passengers were present, so Lanyon's funeral was altogether among sailors. They had laid the body, sewn up in canvas—for he

had had no hammock—on one of the fore-hatch gratings, and covered it over with the big ensign ; four of the dead man's watch-mates brought him along, and the rest of the ship's company came after ; the upper part of the lee gangway was unshipped and the foot of the grating set upon it, and a couple of hands stood by to haul off the ensign and tip up the body into the sea when the signal was given. All hands stood bare-headed, and the scene was a solemn one. I felt the pathos of the many rough human countenances gathered around, some looking down, some with their eyes fixed on the grating, some with a sort of wonder on them such as children's faces wear when anything unusual is going forward. Joe, the negro seaman, stood with a mournful grin upon his flat, honest black face, and the Southrons hung grim and sulky in the rear ; they were Catholics, and did not like being brought into this ceremony.

My attention, however, was speedily diverted from the crew to the skipper. He seemed extraordinarily agitated, and instead of a Prayer-book held a roll of paper, that

trembled in his grasp as he ran his eyes over the men. It is always customary aboard English ships to bury the dead at sea with the office as given in the Church Service, but I saw that Captain Flanders was going to have a service of his own, and I exchanged glances with little Thomas, who stood at the poop-rail without his hat, looking down, with his eyebrows rounded like the new moon. All the men were silent; nothing could be heard but the wobbling wash of the water alongside, and the creak and strain up aloft as the vessel rolled. The sun shone bright, and the sails soared into a heaven that was fast growing a cloudless blue from horizon to horizon.

"Men," exclaimed the captain in his deep bass, which his excitement made as vibratory as a harp-string, "I am aware that when a man dies at sea it is customary to bury him according to the rites of the religion in which the captain and crew believe. But I do not believe in the Church of England. I am a primitive Christian. I believe, and all you who hear me should likewise believe, that prayer is

only acceptable when offered in the edifice constructed by the Almighty, whose roof," he cried, pointing upwards with a wild, dramatic gesture, "is yonder blue, and whose floor is the green of the fields and the billows of the ocean. I say, men, that the primitive Christian, whose cathedral is the universal world, wants neither archbishop, bishop, priest, monk, curate, nor clerk to pray with him or for him!" By this time his excitement was so great, that his eyes glowed in his head like a cat's in the dark; he dashed his arm about, striking the paper in his hand such repeated blows, that I conceived he would presently demolish it. I saw the men staring round at one another, evidently a great deal puzzled to know what all this meant, though I believe most of them thought it was all ship-shape, and a regular part of the usual ceremony.

"Instead, therefore," he continued, almost shouting, "of reading a service opposed to the examples of those forefathers of yours and mine, men, whose memory is more refreshing to the Christian

heart than is the fountain of the desert to the tongue of the parched Arab, I intend," he cried, flourishing his manuscript, "to read you an essay upon spirits, in which I shall invite you not to mourn for our dead shipmate, but to know and feel with me that even as we stand here looking upon the flag that covers his clay, his spirit—himself, indeed!—not an object that we can touch, but an object we may, by prayer, hear and behold, is among us—there, or there, or there—ay, or there! for *there* he stands, erect among you, visible to me. My God! how visible!"

With his long forefinger projected, his head thrown back, his eyes glowing, the sun reflected in the tight polished skin of his long, narrow forehead, he pointed plump at the negro.

Joe, who had been listening to this extraordinary harangue, with his head gradually falling back and his mouth slowly opening wider and wider, terrified by the concluding shout of the skipper, and by all hands turning to look at him, and either believing that he himself had become a spirit, or that

Lanyon's ghost was just behind, uttered a peculiar yell, and jumped with all his strength sideways, and striking a lightly built Dane of the name of Andersen full in the stomach, tumbled him clean over, and they both rolled away to the foot of the mainmast. This accident, which under any other circumstance would have produced a general laugh, and probably some horse-play, merely served to increase the alarm of the sailors, who had been rendered nervous enough already by the manner in which the captain had pointed indiscriminately among them, and they began to huddle together, occasionally glancing over their shoulders whilst they watched the face of the skipper, whose fluency had not been checked an instant by the capsizal of the negro.

He was now growing incoherent, talking the wildest stuff, and flinging about like a Shaker. The more incomprehensible he grew, the more emphatic he became, and I was beginning to wonder how long he was going to keep us listening to his nonsense, when he pulled open the manu-

script, and elevating his hand, began to read.

The lecture lasted half an hour. I should be sorry to give even what my memory preserves of it. It was crammed full of quotations from all sorts of writers, and it was all about ghosts and spirits, and what they had said and how they had appeared, and the use of them as tests of primitive Christianity. Long before it was over the men had grown impatient, and were shuffling about with their feet as if they were listening to a long sermon in church. It was plain that not one of them understood a word of it, any more than the captain himself did, in my opinion. Before a third of it had been read, little Thomas, with a face of disgust, slued on his heel and walked away aft, and I saw the captain lift his eyes and notice the mate's action.

At last he came to an end, pocketed the manuscript, and exclaimed, in a deep voice, "Let him depart in peace." This was his signal for tilting the grating, but the men who held it did not understand him, and looked at me, and I had to make a sign;

on this they hove up the end of the grating, whilst one of them snatched off the ensign, and the body fell. The captain went into the cuddy.

"That'll do, men," said I. "Carry that grating forward, roll up the ensign, and stow it away in the flag-locker."

And so terminated poor Lanyon's funeral.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "JESSIE JACKSON."

I WAS not much surprised that the men took but little notice of Captain Flanders' method of conducting a funeral service. It was a thing that had nothing to do with the ship's discipline; they would hardly guess that he was not in his right mind until he had acted like a madman in matters whose right ordering they understood. Had he called all hands to close-reef the topsails with a pleasant breeze astern, or attempted to heave the ship to in a gale of wind under a flying jib, the men would have believed him mad; but when it came to things out of their reckoning like a funeral service, they could not swear that he was not orthodox in all he did, and as all the education aboard was aft, they were

bound to think that what came from aft was right.' The truth is, merchant sailors are the most ignorant body of men in the world. I say this with reluctance and shame, but it is my experience. They are mending a little, though a very little now, I believe, but a few years ago there was scarcely a ship's company afloat of whom more than two or three could read. Jack is used as a slave, is utterly neglected, badly fed, clothed, and lodged, and leads and lives the life of an animal. There is not a nation of savages known to this country but has more money expended on its souls and brains than sailors.

The boatswain of the *Waldershare* was an intelligent seaman, far above the average, yet, finding me forward of the galley that afternoon watching some job, the nature of which I forget, he came up to me and said, "I beg pardon, sir, but me and Chips have been having an argument over Lan-yon's funeral, and perhaps you'll settle it. Chips he says that there isn't but one service, and that's wrote down, and all that you've got to do when you bury a man is

to read it out. He says that service wasn't the one the skipper read : what it was that he read, Chips he says he don't know ; but he argues it wasn't regular. Now, what I says is this," said he, laying a big, hairy fist in the hollow of a palm as hard and shiny as the sole of an old boot, "that there isn't no regular service at all. When a shipmate dies, you may read a prayer over him or deliver a speech. I say it's just a matter of fancy. I was in a Liverpool brig, bound to Halifax, Nova Scotia, when two men died in a week. All that the skipper said when the first body was brought to the gangway was this : 'Men,' he says, 'Jim's cable has parted, and he's gone. There lies his body, but where the rest of him is, mates,' he says, 'you must turn to and read the Bible to find out.' This was all he said. Two days afterwards, t'other man dies, and *his* body was brought aft, and all that the skipper says was, 'Men, this here corpus was Tom Long's. You remember what I told you about Jim ? well, I says the same thing of Tom.' Chips says that was all wrong ; but what I says is, there isn't no

regular service, but that you can say just what you please over a dead shipmate, perwiding, of course, you're respectful, and don't use no bad language."

I gave him my notion of the matter, but at the same time put it in such a way as to make him believe it was merely a question for a man's own judgment, and that the skipper had done what no doubt he believed to be the correct thing. Indeed, I was extremely anxious to keep all suspicion of the captain's sanity out of the forecastle. If once the men should take it into their heads to believe him mad, there was no foretelling the trouble that might come upon the ship.

We had now fine weather again; the afternoon was cloudless, with a soft cool wind blowing from the east. When I looked around upon the blue sea, with its surface like shot silk, and at the stately heights of white canvas silently doing their work, and held as steady by the breeze as though they had been carved out of marble, and listened to the hum of the froth at the stem, falling upon the ear like the note of

a song, I found it difficult to realize the furious gale of the preceding night, the screaming of the hurricane, the main-deck full of water, the horrible straining and groaning of the tossed and driven ship. There was still a long swell following us astern, but it was perceptible only so far as it gave a new kind of grace to the motion of the ship, heaving her forward with stately sweeps, then leaving her to sink with a bow, as though she paused in her running to drop a curtsy out of very wantonness.

I had had a long chat with Nelly, who remained on deck when the other passengers and the captain went below to lunch, and told her all about the gale, and the death of Lanyon, and the captain's curious notion of a burial service. Then we talked of Burmarsh and the Johnsons, how much she would have to tell Phœbe when she got home again, and we planned what she should do when we arrived at Callao. She was for remaining on board the ship, but I considered that it would be best for her to board with some English family, if such could

be found, whilst the ship remained in port ; she would have more privileges in that way, and companions to show her about the place. However, we did not dwell much upon this, for Callao was a long way off yet, and we had a good nine or ten weeks to settle our plans in. Indeed, to speak the truth, I had as good as made up my mind to marry her at Callao ; she had gone out with me as a sweetheart, but she should return my wife, and no one aboard need know anything about it, unless it were Mr. Thomas, whom I could trust. But, as I have said, these were early times, and I did not so much as breathe my idea to her.

I had left her to go aft to look at the compass, when I was hailed by a man in the mizzen-topmast cross-trees, who was at work on some chafing gear up there.

"Hello!" I answered.

"There's something black right away out to windward yonder," he cried ; "about four points on the starboard bow."

"What does it look like?"

"Why, it's only a speck, sir, and I can't

say ; and there's no telling how far off it is."

" Hold on ! " I called ; " I'll bring the glass aloft."

I jumped into the mizzen-rigging and gained the top.

" Aloft there ! " said I, looking up at man who was overhead ; " where away is your speck ? "

He pointed with his finger, and looking in that direction, I clearly perceived a small black spot, apparently close under the horizon, that vanished and reappeared as the swell rose and sank between us and it. I had great difficulty in fixing it with the glass, but all on a sudden it leapt into the circle of the lens, and before it could vanish again behind the tall blue swell, I very plainly saw that it was a ship's boat, painted black, and without a mast. I kept the glass steadied to the point at which I had directed it, and in a few moments the boat again appeared. She was a long distance off, and the man who had first seen her must have had a very powerful sight.

"It's a ship's boat," I called out to him, "but I don't see anybody in her."

I had another long look, and as the boat rose high on the swell, which threw the outline of her gunwale sharp against the keen blue sky, I fancied I could discern a black dot in her stern-sheets.

I gained the deck, and putting my head into the skylight, called to the skipper, who sat at lunch.

"There's a ship's boat in sight, sir, and I believe there's a man in her, but I won't be sure."

"How does she bear?"

"Broad on the starboard bow, sir."

He left the table and came on deck, and called to me to hand him the glass; but I told him she was not visible from the deck.

"Let her go off a couple of points," he exclaimed, motioning to the man at the wheel, "and ease off the lee main-braces."

We held on in this way for about twenty minutes, during which time I stood on the hencoop keeping a bright look-out for the object, which the shift of helm should bring

well forward of the starboard bow. Being nearly dead before the wind, that was but a light breeze, our progress was slow. Suddenly a hand on the forecastle called out, "There's a boat ahead of us, sir!—there she is!" and at the same moment she rose clear to my eye on the summit of the swell. The captain levelled the glass, and took a long squint. She rose and vanished several times whilst he looked.

"I see a man in her holding up an oar with something white fluttering at the end of it—see what you can make out," said he, handing me the glass.

The boat swung steadily into the field the moment my eye was at the glass, and I saw not one, but two human figures in the boat; one forward in the bow, and the other amidships, holding erect an oar (as I believed), to which was attached a pocket-handkerchief.

The sighting of an open boat at sea with people in her is an extremely unusual occurrence. The news spread through the ship like wildfire, and the cook came running out of the galley, the steward out of the

cuddy, and the watch below out of the forecastle, to view an object that no sailor can behold without a thrill. Even an empty boat at sea, rolling here and there bottom up, is a touching thing in the eye of a sailor, as it almost invariably indicates a disaster. He knows that she was once part of a ship, and may be the only fragment left of her; and when you see her bottom up, with the green water pouring along her keel, and the sunshine flashing upon her wet planking as she emerges for a moment, to be overwhelmed again a few seconds after, you cannot help imagining that shipwrecked people must have been in her once, and then you think of the terrible hours of suspense, the dark nights coming down, the hunger and thirst, the bitter, protracted anguish that was ended you know not when, nor after how long a time, though yonder lies all that remains of the story, and it is already growing green and brown under the restless sea and the unpitying sun. But the interest grows deep beyond expression when the boat that a ship encounters lives, and human beings are seen in her. You

seem at such a time to draw a long breath, for you cannot guess what sight of horror has been reserved for your eyes, and what tales of suffering you may have to listen to.

I noticed that the nearer we drew to the boat the more restless and disturbed in his manner Captain Flanders became. He had so far exhibited the same behaviour on every occasion that had made a call upon his feelings—when the French ship went ashore on the Goodwins, when the cook had run into the cuddy pursued by the men, when Lanyon was struck dead at the wheel, etc. He bade me give him the glass, but his hand trembled so much he could not use it, and returned it to me, telling me, with a tremor in his voice, to see if there were more than two men in the boat, and particularly if there were any women.

I again had a good look, for by this time the boat was not more than a mile distant, and her shape lay quite plain on the water, though the swell was continually hiding her; however, I could not make out more than two men, one of whom was now

standing up in the bow, throwing his arms up and down, whilst the other sat flourishing the oar.

"He has dropped his oar now, sir!" I exclaimed. "Ah, I see! he has thrown it over the stern and is trying to scull the boat. That must mean they have only one oar aboard."

"Get the courses hauled up," said the captain, "and see that a hand is stationed with a line ready to heave it in the boat as we bring her alongside."

I ran forward to get these orders executed.

"Lower away your royal and top-gallant yards and slacken off your jib-sheets," sung out the skipper, in a voice the unmistakable excitement of which made all hands stare aft at him. This was done, and the *Walder-share*, losing much of her way, floated languidly towards the boat, that was now within hailing distance.

"Look out for a line!" I shouted from the forecastle, and the man who stood in the bow waved his hand with a gesture that made me see at once he was a sailor.

"They seem none the worse for being

adrift," exclaimed the boatswain, who stood near me. "Blowed if they could take it easier if they was crossing from Gravesend to Tilbury."

"Steady!" I shouted. "Port your helm a little."

The wheel was put over.

"Stand by!" cried the man who held the line, and the coil fell cleverly into the boat, that in a minute sheered alongside and lay wobbling under the starboard gangway. There was a rush to the quarter-deck to see the men come aboard; all discipline was forgotten in such a moment as this. The gangway was unshipped, and some steps thrown over the side, and the two men came on deck.

The first man was the one who had stood in the bow waving his arms. He was a tall, thin, long-faced man, with a yellow skin and a bunch of black hair under his chin; dressed in a blue alpaca coat and blue serge trousers, and a soft felt white hat with a very broad brim. From the very crown of his hat to the square toes of his long boots he was a Yankee, and when his

feet touched the deck, he took a cool, steady stare around him just as he might have done had he merely boarded us from his own ship to make inquiries.

His companion was a short, thick, square-built man, with long, immensely round arms, at the end of each of which hung a fist fit for a giant nine feet high. He was a half-caste, as well as I could make out, though his natural brown had been considerably deepened by the sun ; he had small, fierce black eyes, the African nose with the European mouth, and he wore a short, bristly moustache, that served to heighten the white of a row of long sharp teeth that glistened between his red lips. His jaws and neck were those of a bull-dog. His dress consisted of a pair of flowing duck trousers and a striped cotton shirt, and around his waist was a broad leather belt with nozzles for the reception of a knife or a pistol, or any other weapon he might deem it necessary to carry about with him in the exercise of his vocation. He looked as complete a ruffian as ever went clothed in human attire, and as he bounded over the

ship's side he gazed around him with a scowl.

"May I ask if the cap'n of this vessel is hereabouts?" exclaimed the first man, with a strong nasal accent and speaking with a drawl. He had been looking around for some one resembling a shipmaster, and small wonder that he had not discovered Captain Flanders to be his man.

"I command this ship," answered the skipper, "and I am glad to have been the means of preserving you. Step aft into the cuddy, where your wants shall be attended to at once."

"Cap'n, let me shake your hand." The Yankee gripped the skipper's fingers. "I've no smartness at speech-making, but you've saved me and my mate here from a tarnation ugly death, and though neither him nor me has tasted a blessed drop of drink nor a mossul of food since supper-time last night, I'd choke sooner than swaller a mouthful aboard this ship before I had thanked you for my life." These were his very words as I remember them, and he then wrung the captain's hand violently

and brushed his eyes over with the back of his long yellow claws. The half-caste muttered some words of thanks, but what he said I did not hear.

They were both following the captain into the cuddy, when the Yankee stopped.

"What about that 'ere boat?" he exclaimed. "Is she worth slinging aboard? She was my port quarter-boat, and cost nigh about one hundred dollars." The captain shook his head. "Wal, then, let her go," said the Yankee, and they all three entered the cuddy.

I overheard the crew, who hung about the quarter-deck, discussing these unexpected visitors.

"Bill, the black 'un's a rascal. No sogerin' with him, mate."

"Ay, a down-east knuckle-duster. He'd have his teeth in your throat if you didn't hear his first orders!"

"He wants towing astern for a few days. He'd be the better for a little cleanin', mates."

"His face beats my time! A shark must ha' been *his* mother."

"One of you jump into the boat and cast her adrift," I called out. "Hands aft to the braces. Man the top-gallant halliards."

It was like a dream to see the boat, that was just now ahead with men in her, drop astern empty. She seemed almost human in my eyes, as she rose and fell in our long silvery wake, and I watched her as I walked along the poop, until she vanished out of sight. It is the immensity of the ocean that gives the waifs one meets upon it their pathetic interest. The scene is so spacious, and the loneliness so great, that one cannot behold even a broken spar floating leagues out at sea without a kind of compassion, as though it could not but feel its desolateness.

Presently the captain came up the companion on to the poop, followed by the two rescued men. The Yankee had slung the ship's glass over his shoulder, and around the neck of the other was suspended a pair of powerful binocular glasses, belonging to Captain Flanders. They both looked the better for the food and drink they had taken, and as they all three came forward the

Yankee squinted round him with lively curiosity, staring hard at Nelly, and contriving an ungainly and ludicrously convulsed bow as he passed her.

"Now, Obed," said he, "you take the fore-royal, and I'll perch myself on the main. I guess the 'rizon's as clear as glass, and if there's anything visible, you'll oblige me by lettin' me hear what quality of voice the Creator has blessed you with."

As he said this he clawed hold of the main-rigging, and floundered up the ratlines, the joints of his long bony shanks sticking out against his trousers like knuckles, and his feet protruding through the rigging like outriggers slewed inboard. Meanwhile Obed, as the Yankee called him, always preserving his villainous scowl, and seeming to have no eyes for what was about him, went with a walk like a fisherman's trot along the main-deck, slung himself with one hand into the fore-rigging, and jogged aloft with a regular beat of the feet and patting of the hands, as though he kept time to a tune. The men who were at work about the deck followed him and the Yankee with

their eyes, considerably puzzled that the first thing a couple of mariners newly rescued from the very jaws of death should do was to masthead themselves.

On reaching the main-royal yard the Yankee jammed himself between the back-stay and the mast, and in that posture slowly swept the horizon with his glass. Obed, on the other hand, anxious to astonish the weak nerves of the Britishers, stood on the fore-royal yard, and crossing his right leg over his left, whilst he leant with his elbow on the truck—for our short royal-mast heads barely showed three feet above the yards when hoisted—applied the binoculars to his eyes, and surveyed the horizon from that immense height with all the ease of a young gentleman in a theatre-stall studying a beauty in a distant box.

Whilst the two men went aloft, Captain Flanders stood alongside of me watching them, and suddenly exclaimed, “I hope they’ll see her! I hope they’ll see her! I have promised him all the assistance I can render. The demons! Never did I hear of such inhuman conduct!” His voice be-

trayed great agitation, and he appeared to talk to himself more than to me.

Presently, fixing his eyes on my face, he exclaimed, "Those two men, Mr. Lee, are the master and first mate of an American barque, called the *Jessie Jackson*. The men mutinied, and sent them adrift this morning in the midst of a heavy sea—you remember what the sea was at eight o'clock, sir?—with only one oar, and without a drop of water or an ounce of bread. My blood boils to think of such fiendish cruelty. They have run away with the vessel, and Captain Taber—that's he aloft on the main-royal yard there—believes that it is their intention to put her ashore somewhere to the east'ards of the Amazon, as the vessel is bound to Pernambuco, and they can find an excuse for being in that neighbourhood."

"I suppose the captain has gone aloft to try to see if he can make her out anywhere, sir?"

"Yes, and if we overhaul her, I have promised to chase her, if she don't lead me too far out of my course."

This was as much as he condescended to

tell me, or rather, I think he was too much agitated to sustain a conversation. He walked as far as the port quarter-boat, and, without addressing the ladies, stood looking aloft, occasionally muttering to himself and slightly motioning with his right hand. At the mastheads the Yankee and his mate occasionally exchanged a call, but what they said I could not hear, owing to the flapping of the mainsail, for the wind had fallen very light, and every roll of the ship sent the heavy courses beating against the masts and rigging.

Presently Captain Taber came down, leaving Obed aloft. The half-caste had now seated himself on the yard, and his legs hung before the sail, whilst he occasionally lifted the glasses to his eyes. The Yankee joined Captain Flanders, and they had a long talk. I confess I found nothing in our skipper promising to chase the pirates—running away with a ship, the reader must know, is an act of piracy—providing they did not haul him out of his own course; it was not more than one captain would do to help another, and unless the barque carried

guns, and her men were well armed, there was little doubt that our ship was strong-handed enough to carry her easily, could we lay her aboard. But it was not very clear to me what would be done if we succeeded in capturing her. As to the cause of the mutiny, I did not need to hear much of that after looking at the half-caste chief mate. Ruffianly officers always do make ruffianly crews, and if Obed was not the greatest ruffian that ever walked a deck, I was willing to own that I was blind of both eyes.

Anyhow, the barque was not in sight. It was now hard upon four o'clock; the two men had been sent adrift at eight; we had no doubt sighted them pretty nearly in the spot where they had been sent adrift, and consequently the *Jessie Jackson* had eight hours' start of us. I thought this was heavy odds against our overhauling her, for if she only shifted her course a couple of points, she would be out of sight behind the horizon when we were abeam of her, and we should pass without seeing her; that is, if we sailed better than she,

which was yet to be proved. I thought it probable that she was the barque we had sighted to windward on the previous evening, when the sunset lay heavy upon the horizon, and which the hands aloft at the time had described as a glob of blood. If so, then she must have run further to the southwards by eight hours than we.

How the news got about, I don't know; but it was soon spread fore and aft that the men we had rescued were the captain and mate of an American vessel, the crew of which had mutinied and run off with the ship, after sending the skipper and first officer adrift, and that the *Waldershare* was to chase them. All through the dog-watches the hands talked together in groups forward, peering over both bows and under the jibs, and some going aloft to see if anything like a sail was visible ahead. Such a chase as Captain Flanders meditated was altogether a novelty in the lives of these merchant sailors, and filled them, as indeed it filled me, with interest and excitement. But nothing in all this adventure struck me as more curious than the perfect coolness

with which the American captain accommodated himself to the situation in which he found himself placed. Rescued but a short time ago from a fate of which, as a sailor, he would perfectly appreciate the lingering horror and suffering, he now paced the poop of the *Waldershare* with as much self-possession and nonchalance as he could have shown had he been put aboard to take a new command.

All this time Obed remained aloft, as mute and wooden as a figure-head.

I was talking to Mr. Thomas about the chances of the chase, and he was condemning Captain Flanders' resolution in very unmeasured terms, saying that it was a captain's duty to sail his ship to her destination with all practicable speed, and that it would be a bad look-out for ship-owners and traders if masters of vessels were at liberty to go out of their way and delay their voyage to hunt after adventures of this kind, when the Yankee came over to us, Captain Flanders having left the deck.

"I presume, gentlemen," says he, thumbing the fore part of his broad-brimmed hat

as though he would lift it, "that I am speaking to the mates of this here ship?"

Mr. Thomas replied that that was so.

"I beg, then," said he, "you'll excuse the liberty if I ask one of you for a chew of tobacco. I find your cap'n doesn't smoke, and when my men cut me adrift they forgot to favour me with anything that I could get a draw or a spit out of."

I had a piece of a stick of tobacco in my pocket, which I gave him. He bit out a mouthful, and said that with my leave he would put the rest in his pocket.

"Are you the chief officer?" he inquired of Mr. Thomas.

"I am."

"The cap'n tells me you have sailed in this ship before. I reckon you've got a clipper here, sir. I was admiring her run as she bore down to us. Baltimore never turned out a superior article. I never saw finer lines, though we've built some nautical expresses in the States too, sir, even in my time. What's her best pace, do you guess?"

"With the wind right abeam and all

three royals on her, the log has given sixteen: but then she was homeward bound, had worked herself easy, and was not down to the chain-plate bolts with iron and steel."

"How much have you got out of her this voyage?"

"At the very best, twelve—that was with a smooth sea."

"That'll serve!" exclaimed the Yankee, going to the side to squirt the tobacco juice out of his mouth: "the *Jessie* can't beat that, or, if she can, I calculate the wind that'll drive her twelve 'll drive you thirteen."

"That's very likely," said I.

"I want to overhaul that vessel badly," he continued, in his strong nasal accent, and speaking with a tiresome drawl, that seemed a tremendous piece of affectation alongside the active fire in his eyes. "Every blessed dollar I own in the world is in her. Half of her belongs to me, and if those creatures put her ashore, which I reckon is their lay, they'll strand me too, gentlemen, and that's a fact."

"Have you any notion what course they mean to steer?" asked Mr. Thomas.

"Wal, if Obed's ears are good for a caution, I calculate they mean to sail straight on. He heard enough to guess what they mean to be at; and if they don't change their minds, they'll try for the south'ard of the Guy-hana coast, somewhere betwixts the mouth of the Amazon River and Roque Cape. The second mate leads the mutiny, and he has a pretty considerable acquaintance with that coast, havin' been raised in Cayenne" (he pronounced it Cayin). "Wal, as I reckon, gentlemen, they'll make your course until they catch the trades, and if that be so," he exclaimed, with a sudden slap of his thigh, "we'll have 'em yet!"

I asked what was the cause of the mutiny.

He vouchsafed no further information than by saying that it lay among four men, and that the ringleader was the second mate. The crew consisted of ten hands. Three of the men were well-disposed, and the mutineers, knowing this, had closed the

forescuttle before going aft ; they then over-powered the mate, made his feet fast, and stowed him away in one of the quarter-boats. The skipper, hearing Obed's shouts, rushed on deck, where he was immediately knocked down and sat upon by a couple of the men, whilst the others lowered away the boat, unhooked the falls, and brought her alongside ; they then dragged the skipper to the gangway, waited until a sea lifted the boat, and then dropped him into it, after which they let her go adrift, put the helm over, filled and stood on, leaving the boat tossing in a heavy sea. The two men thus abandoned had only one oar, which they lashed to the end of the painter and hove overboard, and this kept the boat's head to the sea, otherwise she would have capsized ; as it was, they had to keep bailing for their lives with a soup-and-bouilli tin which they found in the stern-sheets ; but the wind moderated fast, and the sea went down with it, and all that remained for them to do was to keep a look-out for any passing ship.

The Yankee told his story without the

least air of excitement, and with a slow, long drawl. I asked if the men were armed? He answered that the only fire-arm aboard was his pistol, and added that if our ship could only overhaul his vessel, there would be no difficulty in regaining her, as the mutineers were in a minority, and half a dozen of the *Waldershare's* crew, headed by himself and Obed, would manage the business.

Having said this, and squirting another mouthful of tobacco juice overboard, he went forward and hailed his mate from the forecastle.

"Do you see anything up there?"

"Nothing."

"Come down, then."

"There's a murdering face for you!" said Mr. Thomas, indicating Obed, as the two men came aft, inquisitively followed by the eyes of the crew. "The very sight of him is enough to breed a mutiny. See how our men look at them and whisper! If he's not hanged soon there'll be some broken skulls going yet among the poor devils he may lord it over."

They entered the cuddy, into which they had been beckoned by the steward; and when the dinner was put upon the table, they both took their places (as I saw through the skylight, for my watch had come round again), Obed right opposite to Nelly, who eyed him with disgust and aversion, though I never once saw him lift his eyes or look around. Indeed, the man was out of his element there, and would have enjoyed his meal more in the forecastle, though I doubt if the crew would have suffered him to come among them. As to Captain Taber, his drawling notes sounded incessantly. As often as I looked down I saw him nodding, with his glass to his lips, to one or the other of the persons around him. It was impossible not to feel respect for a man who could endure with festive complacency such trouble as had befallen our Yankee.

As the sun went down, the breeze dropped; and by the time that the darkness had closed round the ship, there was not a breath of air. The sea was full of stars, and it was like looking at the sky, so perfectly were the small yellow orbs

reflected. I lingered half-way up the poop-ladder, with my elbows on the bulwark, to smoke a pipe before I turned in. Right aft, Captain Taber was talking to Madam Espinosa, and her foolish laugh was incessant; Mr. Black, Espinosa, and Nelly conversed near the skylight; the captain walked the deserted side of the poop alone; and near me stood Mr. Thomas and Obed, the latter answering the chief mate's questions in a thick voice, that appeared to proceed from his stomach.

It seemed hard not to be alone with my sweetheart on such a night; but she was near me, and I knew she was well, and I made this reflection satisfy me. The atmosphere was sultry, but as the ship rose and sank with the ebony swell (that filled the eye with the illusion of the stars sweeping through the sea as though the ocean were full of shooting fires), the sails flapped heavily, discharging at intervals a shower of dew, and filling the decks with circling draughts of sweet air. At times a meteor would sail through the dark sky, leaving a silvery trail as it went, and breaking and

vanishing in a cloud of luminous dust. The phosphorescent blue fires swarmed, kindling and fading fitfully, among the stars reflected in the water; and the flapping of the sails against the masts, and the wash of the water around the ship, and the metallic clank of the tiller-chains, with now and again the creaking of a block overhead or the straining of a timber, were sounds which mingled pleasantly with the voices and the laughter upon the deck.

It remained calm all through the first and middle watches. Nature appeared to have exhausted herself over the previous night's job; the very ocean swell had grown fainter, and the great Atlantic was fast becoming as breathless as an inland lake. A cabin had been offered to the American captain and his mate, but the only use they had made of it was to trim themselves up for dinner. They both slept on deck, and kept watch and watch. When I relieved Mr. Thomas at midnight, I found Captain Taber routing out Obed, who lay on a hen-coop over against the port quarter-boat with his head on a coil of rope. The Yankee took

the mate's place, turning up his coat-collars and hoisting his knee-caps almost into his mouth, and appeared to fall asleep in a moment. About half a dozen times in the four hours I think Obed must have gone aloft as high, probably, as the fore-royal yard, though as we lay with square yards I could not follow him with my eye.

When he came down the first time I asked him what he hoped to see ?

"Why, the *Jessie Jackson*," says he, speaking with a negro's voice.

"But we've made no progress worth mentioning since you've been aboard, and your ship can't be any nearer now than she was when we sighted your boat."

"I hope my goin' aloft ain't contrairy to the rules of this hooker ?" says he.

"Not a bit," I answered. "You may stop aloft and take your meals aloft till the *Jessie Jackson* heaves in sight, if you please."

"I want to be the first man to sight her, and I should like to be the first man to board her," said he, with a little tremble in his thick speech, and the whites of his eyes gleaming as he rolled them about.

" You'd make the lee scuppers run red if you could, wouldn't you, my beauty? " I thought, as I left him and stood for some time alongside the man at the wheel.

The fellow excited in me more aversion than I knew how to control. I felt a sort of debasement in talking to him, and when he presently pulled out a tobacco-pipe that the steward had procured for him, and lighted it, he looked like the very devil himself, as the flame of the match illuminated his dark face and glittered in his gleaming eyes, and exposed the monkeyfied protrusion of his lips as he wrapped them round the pipe stem. However, he had not yet done with me, for presently he came to where I stood, and peered over the stern to look about him for a catspaw. He sucked his pipe hard, and the muscular power of his chest was curiously expressed in the sound of his vigorous breathing, that exactly resembled a whale blowing in the distance.

" I reckon that yaller cuss, Nathan, guesses we're at the bottom of the sea by this time," said he, with a grin that laid bare

his teeth. "There are three casks of rum in the mainhold, slap under the hatches, and they'll have broached one when they cut us adrift, and I calculate there's been no want of singin' aboard the *Jessie* this day. They've cussed me and the old man up to the eyes over and over agin ;—you see ; and Nathan has jumped on to the cap'n's chair and given out my name, an' if I had been thar listenin' I couldn't know better what he said than I dew here. Every man'll have had a pannikin full o' black rum, an' I know the words they gave me as they drunk it down ! "

Beyond the tremble in his voice there was no rage expressed in it ; but when he had done speaking, he bit the shank of his pipe off, and the bowl fell to the deck. He did not appear to notice this for some moments, and then suddenly spat the shank from his mouth, picked up the bowl and slung it overboard with a sweep of his arm that made the air whistle, and sprang forward ; and under the foot of the mainsail I could see his dark body dancing up the lower fore-rigging, his furious gestures

shaking the shrouds as heavily as if half a dozen men were climbing them.

About half an hour before I went below a little breeze sprang up from the north-west. Before I had time to sing out to the watch to trim the yards, Captain Taber tumbled off the hencoop and came sprawling up to me like a disjointed scarecrow on the top of his long toes.

"Now you have it!" he cried, rubbing his hands together until his knuckles cracked under the friction. And he danced aft and stood whistling over the stern as though he were calling a dog; and when the hands came aft to man the main-braces, he tallied on with them, shouting, "Hurrah! here's the Britisher as'll froth this puddle! Handsomely over the bricks, my bully boys! Blow up, blow up! Hurrah! Here's the A 1 copper bottom as'll lay plump little *Jessie* aboard! Now then, you nigger, up aloft with yer," he shouted to Obed; "and if ye catch sight of anything on the 'rizon, though it be but a grit o' dirt, screech out, you monkey, as though the devil was flying away with you! Hurrah! the *Jessie* has

our tow-rope, and stand by, bullies, to haul in the slack!"

I was as much amused as the men by the fellow's excitement. He hung about for some time looking over the ship's side and up aloft, and peering into the binnacle, and then betook himself to the hencoop again, adjusting his knees to his throat precisely as before, and falling asleep instantly.

By the time the watch were relieved, the ship was carrying three studding-sails and the breeze freshening. I hove the log and found her doing seven knots. Hearing the log-reel rattle, the Yankee came aft, and when I gave him the speed he burst into a loud laugh, as harsh and metallic as the rasping of a hand-saw. He watched the ship's wake, gloating and chuckling, with his mouth full of tobacco, and was evidently surprised at the speed of the ship under a breeze that was almost astern and still light enough for so deep a vessel.

The wind held steady for several hours, and then veered to the westward and came on to blow fresh in strong puffs. It had hit the *Waldershare's* best sailing point, and at

nine o'clock the ship was lying down with her lee scuppers all bubbling, under a tremendous show of canvas; for Captain Flanders, infected by the Yankee's excitement, had set the main-topmast studding-sail, which was more than he would have done under ordinary circumstances, and the vessel was roaring through the sea as she had only once done before, and that was when the gale had struck her, peeling the water on her weather bow into a high green transparent wave that curled and broke into foam before it was abreast of the gangway, and fled aft, mingling with the boiling water that swept astern to leeward, and making a wake as yellow as cream, that danced and broadened down into the quivering horizon.

I never remember a more splendid sight than the ship offered me from the forecastle, whither I went to give some orders to the boatswain. Right forward away as far as the flying jibboom end is the proper place to look at a ship under canvas, for there she seems a separate thing; from that point of view you have the whole of her in your eye, and can behold the beautiful sight of her

bows ripping up and tearing the water, leaping so as sometimes to expose her forefoot, with the metal sheathing laid bare, and shining brightly as the long lines of foam rush down it, then burying her nose with a hugh *souse* until only her figure-head shows over the vast surge which she sends boiling and hissing right under where you are seated, while her decks slope down to you in a steep run, and the quarter-boat hanging far aft seems suspended over your head. Even where I stood in the eyes of her, though I could not see her bows, I could command the whole of the square canvas, and mark the superb run of her lee bulwark against the white foam flying past, and her iron-black shrouds and backstays contrasted with the vast spaces of swollen polished canvas, with the studding-sails throwing their shadows clean and dark upon the topsails, and the blue sky dancing between the tops and cross-trees and under the foot of the sails, and the water leaping in sparkling green seas as high as her weather bulwarks, then falling back with a hollow hissing splash, like serpents ex-

hausted with their vain endeavours to leap inboard.

"The *Jessie Jackson* must be a clipper with a vengeance if she can beat this!" thought I, the bright triumphant show making the blood leap in my veins. If she were ahead we were bound to overhaul her, and I gazed aloft at the figure of Obed, diminished to dwarfish proportions by the great height he occupied, and longed for the cry of "Sail ho!" for already the excitement of the chase—though, to be sure, until we rose the barque we could not pretend to call it a chase—was strong upon me, and, as I believe, on all hands. Every Englishman belonging to the *Waldershare* was eager to sight the vessel, if only to let the Yankees see what a British merchantman could do in the way of sailing.

However, three long hours went by and nothing hove in sight. In all this time Obed only came down once, and then merely for a few minutes, whilst Captain Taber was up in the mizzen-top every quarter of an hour, working away with the glass to windward and to leeward, and floundering up

and down the rigging with such a wild air of excitement that all hands were on the broad grin watching him. He had still his long drawl and nasal accent, but the coolness that had characterized his behaviour on the preceding night was gone, and his impatience was so great, that when he was not up aloft he was running to and fro the rail at the break of the poop, as you may have seen a newly caught bird travelling along the perch from side to side of his cage, stopping a moment when he got to windward to shade his eyes and peer at the weather horizon, then flopping down to leeward and pausing again to bend his head and squint under the mainsail at the lee horizon; while now and then he would run aft and jump on to the weather poop-rail, clawing the yang with one hand, whilst he leaned his long body sheer over the water in order to see ahead, in which attitude he would utter a variety of exclamations, addressed to the ship at the top of his voice, such as "Go it, jade! hurrah, bully! spank along, spank along! grease your old heels and dance me a Yankee reel, for once!"

well done, old — ! drive into it, sweetheart!" whilst he kept slapping his thigh with his hand as if to encourage the ship by the sound, and finally would spring on to the deck again, making his long legs fly out, and more than once coming plump on his nose.

At about eleven o'clock, however, it breezed up so smartly, that Captain Flanders sung out to me to haul down the main-topmast studding-sail. Indeed, he had held on much longer than I should have thought he would venture to do; for the foam was so close to leeward that a man might almost have touched it by dropping his arm over the bulwark, whilst to windward the ship looked as if her hull were out of water, and as if nothing prevented you from seeing her keel but the bends of her; the forecastle was in a smother of foam, and the thunder of the seas under her bows was audible right aft. In truth, the *Waldershare* was never before so driven; all astern of her the water flashed up as if a gale of wind had just passed; and when she met a sea she seemed to jump clean over it, while the

wind poured out of her courses like the voice of a hurricane, and the sweat ran down the faces of the two men who steered her as if a can of oil had been capsized over their heads.

And yet, after the captain had given the order to get in the studding-sail, the Yankee skipper remonstrated with him with a most beseeching air. However, it would not do ; Captain Flanders was not yet mad enough to lose his spars in order to please a man who wanted to overhaul a runaway ship, and before noon we had all the studding-sails in, and the fore and mizzen royals flying, with hands aloft ; and even then the ship was carrying a couple of top-gallant sails more than she could bear.

Just, however, as the hands were on the fore-royal clewlines and the sail was flapping, Obed, who had dropped on to the top-gallant yard, raised a shout. Captain Taber was right aft against the wheel at the time, but no sooner did the cry reach his ears, than he made a plunge and shot forwards and sprang on to the fore-rigging, where he nearly danced an ordinary seaman, who was

going aloft to furl the royal, into the sea by the convulsive jerking of his legs.

The captain, Mr. Thomas, and myself were taking sights at the time, and we could not give any attention to Obed's shouts, but when we had made eight bells, I put down my sextant and went forward. I looked up ; a couple of ordinary seamen were on the fore-royal yard stowing the sail, and just under them, on either side the mast, were the Yankee skipper and Obed, with their glasses levelled at a point on the port bow.

"Aloft there!" I shouted. "What do you see?"

"A sail!" roared Obed, without removing the glasses from his eyes. "We're waiting to rise her to see her rig."

"Forecastle there!" hailed Captain Flanders. "Is there anything in sight?"

"Yes, sir, a sail," I answered.

"Where away?"

"On the port bow."

He held up his hand in token that he heard me, and then went below, followed by Mr. Thomas, each man to work out the sights in his own cabin, and I returned to

the poop to wait until the chief mate came on deck again. In about a quarter of an hour Captain Taber came running aft, blowing like a grampus.

"By the 'tarnal!" he cried, "she's a barque. She's riz high enough to see that. She's under easy sail! O Lord! if it was only six hours earlier!"

I took the glass from him, but she was not yet visible from the deck.

"We mustn't be cock-sure that she's the *Jessie Jackson*, though," said I. "Barque-rigged vessels are common enough hereabouts."

"Wal, young man, we shall see," he answered. "Whar's the cap'n?"

"Below, working out the sights."

He instantly bolted down the companion. Shortly afterwards Mr. Thomas came on deck.

"Is the Yankee in sight yet?" he asked.

"No, sir, not from the deck; nor, as I have just told the skipper, does it follow that because there's a barque ahead it's his."

"Can they make out what canvas she's under?"

"Easy canvas."

"Main top-gallant sail, eh? Why, then, we're not going to overhaul her in an hour, Mr. Lee, if she chooses to crack on. What does the Yankee mean to do if she turns out to be his ship?"

"Board her, I suppose, sir."

"But suppose they won't let him?"

I shrugged my shoulders. "He's below with Captain Flanders now: I suppose they'll arrange something."

"What did you make us doing just now when you hove the log?"

"Ten and a half."

"If she's under easy canvas," said he, "she must be a fast vessel; for if they can make out her rig from the fore top-gallant yard, something ought to be visible from deck by this time, if we're overhauling her at all."

I pointed the glass, but nothing was in sight. Mr. Espinosa now came up to me with his wife, and wanted me to tell him all about the American captain and his ship; but it was my watch below, and I was not exactly in the humour for a cross-

examination by Mr. Espinosa, so I referred him to Mr. Thomas, and, after exchanging a few words with Nelly, I left the deck.

I had a mouthful to eat before I went to my cabin, and then I laid down and slept soundly for about two hours ; when, awaking and glancing through the port-hole, past which the green water was sweeping at a speed that made me guess the breeze was still very fresh, I bethought me of the Yankee barque, and all the excitement of the chase coming into my mind, I bundled out of my bunk and went on deck, content to sacrifice the remainder of the rest I could have taken for the sake of an adventure, the like of which I had never before been shipmates with.

The moment I gained the deck I saw the whole of my watch on the forecastle staring ahead. The watch on deck were, of course, at work, but every man who could invent an excuse for being forward where he could command the sea was there, and the cause was not far to seek.

Broad on the port bow was a little clipper barque, between four and five miles distant,

painted black, and looking like a toy, all her sails and her hull brilliantly defined in the clear air, and sailing like a witch. Captain Flanders, Captain Taber, Mr. Thomas, and Obed were all to leeward of the poop watching her with glasses, and it seems that she *was* the Yankee's barque, and that I had hit my time for coming on deck cleverly, for only three minutes before we had run up a signal for her to heave to—the flags were all streaming in bright colours at the peak—and it appeared that they had just discovered our meaning, for their two royals and fore top-gallant sails were flying loose, and they were setting the gaff-topsail; a good hint that they were short-handed, for, after loosing the sails, they only sheeted home one at a time. However, it was evident they had no intention of heaving to, and now that they suspected we knew what had happened aboard of her, they were evidently all anxiety to get away from us. One by one they hoisted the yards and made sail, until the little vessel was a complete cloud of canvas, and we, who had been overhauling her fast, now

found that she held her station ahead, and was even beginning to widen the distance between us.

The Yankee's excitement had passed again, and he watched her as coolly as a man might who had no interest in the chase. Obed kept his eyes fixed on her with a diabolical scowl. But Captain Flanders' agitation was singular to witness ; his eyes glowed in their sockets ; every muscle in his face worked ; he was repeatedly pulling off his hat to wipe his forehead, and his legs and arms were all of a quiver. The Yankee skipper glanced at him often with real astonishment, and Mr. Thomas drew away and stationed himself on the weather side of the poop.

It was plain now that there was to be a race for it, although, supposing we had heels enough to range alongside, what could we do if she refused to heave to ? We were not a man-of-war ; we had no guns aboard ; we could not bring her to with a shot. We could, indeed, keep dodging after her until we fell in with a Government vessel ; but, then, they would see with half an

eye that we were a merchantman, and not likely to do that; and, indeed, I was surprised, now she saw our signal to heave to flying, that she did not put her helm up and steer away to another course, for they would very easily suspect it would not answer our purpose to follow her. However, she kept a steady helm, not altering her course by so much as half a point, and she ran along the water like a bird, skimming over the waves with wonderful grace and speed.

Finding that she was slowly drawing away from us, Captain Flanders ordered the royals to be set. It still blew a moderate gale, and the sea had grown very lively; the log was hove, and it was found that the extra canvas had increased the speed of the *Waldershare* by about half a knot. This was not worth counting, and I heard the Yankee skipper tell Captain Flanders that she could easily bear all her studding-sails, and that if he commanded her he would venture his spars for the sake of the run. On this Captain Flanders, whose excitement deepened as

the time went on, sung out to Mr. Thomas to get the fore and main topmast studding-sails on her. With this extra canvas the *Waldershare* appeared to be more pressed than she had been before they were hauled down. Every plunge she gave made her tremble fore and aft ; the seas flew in sheets over her weather bow, and the lee side of the main-deck was all afloat, for she was burying her scuppers and the water could not escape. Every moment I expected to see something go. The strain was terrific ; the rigging yelled, and she peeled the water out of the sea just like the rind of an apple falls over your thumb under the action of a knife.

Once Captain Taber forgot his coolness, and, rushing to the side, yelled out, whilst he slapped his thighs, “ She’s got the scent ! Smoke and hum, sweetheart ! You have her, old bucket ! ”

Indeed, a general excitement was now kindled fore and aft ; all the watch on deck had left their work and joined their mates on the forecastle, and no one thought of calling them back to their duty ; and already

we were stealing up to the barque, from under whose counter streamed a wake the tail-end of which was almost abeam of us, when we saw her hoist away her main top-mast studding-sail.

"Damn 'em!" yelled the Yankee skipper, running the joints of the telescope into one another with a blow of the hand that was like to snap them.

"Let me have that glass for a moment," said I, and I levelled the tube.

She looked a vessel of about three hundred tons, low in the water, and painted black, with a narrow white streak. She had long skysail poles, though the yards were not crossed, and these, with a very great hoist of topsail, made her rig appear lofty almost out of proportion with her size. A man stood at the wheel, sometimes looking up and sometimes around at us; but with the exception of another hand on the foreyard who was doing something to the studding-sail boom, I saw no sign of her crew. In the softening light of the gathering evening, with her shapely hull flashing black on the running green waters, and her canvas soaring

above the water line and finding a back-ground in the dark southerly sky, she looked like a piece of ivory carving; sometimes all below her topsails vanished behind a sea, and then she would emerge, hove high, so that her black hull and the cloud of canvas it supported would appear poised for an instant on a green transparent point of water that reared above the horizon, and leave upon the mind the impression that what it beheld was an exquisite bit of miniature painting.

We had undoubtedly been overhauling her, though not very fast, either, before she set her studding-sails; but though this extra canvas almost laid her on her beam ends, and so much of her copper was out of water that the western sun flashing on it made her look as though the whole of her hull were of bright yellow metal, it enabled her to keep her distance from us, and in the intervals between some of the puffs she drew slightly ahead.

“Gentlemen all!” shouted the Yankee skipper, “look at her walking yonder; is she not a picter? Let her hoist the Stars

and Stripes jest for the colour of the buntin', and she's such a show as the first theayter in Europe or America couldn't match. Gentlemen all, she's half mine, and every dollar I own in the world is in her, and there's a blind old mother, a wife an' five children, holding on to the tow-rope of the *Jessie Jackson*, and she's got to keep 'em goin'. Captain Flanders is a British gentleman, and his heart has warmed up to a feller-Christian an' a strugglin' brother-sailor in trouble; and he means to chase that lovely barque into a calm, and then put me aboard of her. That's the time of day, gentlemen all; and if e'er an officer aboard this noble ship should find himself in Ephraim Taber's quandary, and Ephraim is somewhar within the circumference of the 'rizon to give him a hand, by God, gentlemen, though it cost him half his fortune, yet he'd sarve him day an' night, tooth an' nail, fist an' finger, blow high or blow low, and this is the hand of an American citizen upon it!"

He struck the brass rail a heavy blow, as if he meant that that should answer the purpose of shaking hands all round.

I now began to see daylight ; indeed, the 'cuteness of the Yankee had hit upon the only possible chance he had of recovering his ship, and that was by inducing Captain Flanders to stick to her skirts until a calm should enable us to board her. But suppose she should head out of our course ? Would Captain Flanders follow her ?

I called Mr. Thomas's attention to the captain's glowing eyes and pale and working face, and whispered that in my opinion the Yankee was not only sharp enough to find out that the captain of the *Waldershare* was not quite right in his mind, but to control him to his wishes ; and that if we did not mind our eye we should be finding ourselves first and second mates of a kind of phantom ship commanded by a lunatic, whose mission was no longer to sail the ship to Callao, but to pursue what he could not catch.

"I'm prepared for everything and for the worst," said Mr. Thomas, with a comical face of hopelessness. "I give you my word, Lee, I would rather have broken my leg than joined this ship under Captain Flanders."

He had scarcely said this when Obed raised a shout. It was just such a cry as a negro utters when you kick him on the shins. I looked at the barque to which he was pointing frantically with his great dark hand, and at once saw that something was wrong aboard of her.

"See! see!" yelled Captain Taber, who had steadied the glass on the rail, and was peering into it with his back arched like an enraged cat's; "the fellow's left the wheel and boltin' forrards! Thunder an' lightning! look at the wheel; it's flying round like a locomotive's driver! Christ ha' mercy! There she broaches to! Oh, my blessed spars!" and dashing down the telescope he danced about the deck like a madman.

I had my eye on the vessel whilst he raved, and saw her come round into the wind, her canvas shaking furiously. In a second the studding-sail booms broke off clean at the irons as you might snap the stem of a clay pipe; immediately afterwards the fore top-gallant mast toppled over, breaking just under the yard, the flying jib drooped to the water's edge; and there she

lay almost on her beam ends, with her jibboom pointing directly athwart our hawse, everything in a wild flutter aloft; the wrecked mast with all its hamper lying across the fore-topmast stay, the main-top-sail yard down on the cap, the top-gallant sail and royal all flying loose, and the whole vessel looking like a wreck and driving bodily to leeward.

Only an artist's pencil could depict the Yankee captain's torture, as it was expressed almost entirely in dumb show, though now and again he screamed out some incoherent phrase. He walloped about the deck as though he had been burnt in both feet, shaking his fist at the barque, tearing off his hat and dashing it on to the quarter-deck, rushing at Obed with outstretched hands as though he would strangle him, then slapping his legs and squirting tobacco juice right and left, without the smallest regard to the eyes of the people around him.

"Get in your stun'sails!" shouted Captain Flanders, whose excitement, if not as frenzied as the Yankee's, was more re-

markable. "Aft here, men, and bear a hand! Let go your royal and top-gallant halliards fore and aft! Haul up the mainsail! Starboard your helm—starboard . . . starboard . . . so! Steady now! keep her at that. Smartly aloft, men, and furl those royals. Stand by to back the foreyards!" *

These orders flew out of his mouth in a torrent, and with the *neigh*-like roar that had astonished me on that night when he had silenced the pilot's objection to his sending a boat to the Frenchman on the Goodwins. In truth, the barque had come to a dead stop, and we were sweeping down to her at the rate of ten knots an hour.

As we approached, we could form a better opinion of the confusion aboard. No one was at the wheel, but three or four men were hauling on the clewlines. Every rope aboard of her had been let go, but most of them were jammed in the blocks; the sails, blown hard round the masts, prevented the

* Captain Flanders was right. If you are the windward ship lay your *fore- topsail* to the mast, for your forward sails are more readily filled than the main, in the event of your needing to forge ahead.—W. C. R.

yards from travelling ; the wind had twisted the studding-sails around the standing rigging, and, as the vessel gathered sternway, with her starboard broadside hove high, the seas glanced over her sides and fell in sheets upon her decks.

“ A pretty mess ! ” thought I ; and had she gone down bodily, I should not have been at all surprised. We ran down to within a quarter of a mile of her to windward, backed the fore-topsail, and lay hove to.

Thinking to make his voice carry, the Yankee skipper jumped on to the poop-rail, and clasping a backstay, put his hand to his mouth, and hailed his vessel with a fury that turned his face black, and I thought that such another effort must rupture a blood-vessel. Nevertheless he hailed again, and yet a third time, in the same wild manner, and was joined by Obed, who had sprung half-way up the lee main rigging, and stood there yelling. Indeed, the contortions of the Yankee and his chief mate were irresistibly absurd, and when to these were added the harsh, rasping *skreek*

of the one, and the heavy African *yowl* of the other, the effect was overwhelming, and there was scarcely a man forward in our ship who was not shaking with laughter.

No notice being taken of all this shouting, Captain Flanders sung out to the steward to bring him his speaking-trumpet.

"Barque ahoy!" he roared.

We all waited for the responding "Hello!" but no answer came back. All the glasses were in hand, but the only thing resembling a man that I could make out with the naked eye stood at the wheel, keeping it pressed hard over, in the hope, of course, of getting the barque to pay off.

We were all growing rather bewildered, and the Yankee skipper was evidently at a loss, when suddenly Mr. Thomas, who was working away with a glass, cried out, "They're holding up a black board, sir, and there's something written upon it!"

I very plainly beheld the figures of two men uprear themselves behind the high bulwarks, holding between them a large black board. The Yankee sprang off the rail, tumbled on his knees, and levelled his glass.

"I can make it out," cried Mr. Thomas.
"NAT—DEA"—oh! 'NATHAN'S DEAD
—MUTINY'S OVER—COME ABOARD.'
That's it, sir."

"Ay, that's it!" sung out the Yankee.
"Now for a boat, cap'n! By glory, the old
hooker's mine agin, arter all! Hurrah,
bullies!"

The half-caste had swung himself on to
the deck and was already fumbling at the
falls of the port quarter-boat. "Pretty cool
fish!" thought I. "At all events, he
might wait until he gets his orders."

"Lay aft some hands to board the
barque!" shouted Captain Flanders. In a
moment there was a rush of men. I think
every man in the ship, barring the cook
and the steward, floundered aft, and the
quarter-deck was thick with them.

"Gently!" I sung out, as they rushed,
elbowing each other, up the poop-ladders;
for, in truth, four men were as much as we
needed, seeing that I or Mr. Thomas would
have to take charge of the boat, and that
we had the Yankee and Obed to carry
as well.

"Jump in there, Mr. Lee," called out the captain ; "see that the plug's all right."

The men scrambled for a seat on the thwarts, but as I was in command now, I ordered them all out, and choosing four of the strongest hands out of the crowd that stood around, they got into the boat. I followed ; then came Obed, who squatted himself in the bows ; and last entered the Yankee, after warmly shaking Captain Flanders' hand, and bowing to the passengers with a mighty flourish of his arm—for his hat was on the quarter-deck, and he was too excited to remember that he was without one.

Though it was blowing a very strong breeze of wind, and there was a middling sea on, I had no anxiety in facing it, always having had a great knack at handling a boat ; the port boat's falls were also provided with patent hooks, which sprang open and released the boat the moment she touched the water, and relieved the hooks of her weight, and as to leeward of the hull of the *Waldershare* the water was tolerably smooth, we got away from the ship very

cleverly, and rowed smartly towards the barque. Still, the sea was heavy enough to demand some very nice steering ; one moment we were hove on the summit of a wave, with the foam of it boiling under us and alongside as high as our gunwales, whilst the hull of the heeling barque seemed actually beneath us, as though we looked at her from the top of a hill ; the next moment we had sunk into the hollow of the sea, with walls of roaring green water all around us, and a calm all about, though the wind was whistling over our heads and soaking our hair and faces with the spray it flung down upon us.

The barque was rolling heavily, and the long lines of the setting sun sparkled in her streaming sides as she rose and fell to the seas, which shattered themselves against her sides and flew in smoke over her, or curled in big green combers right on to her decks, whilst all aloft her loose canvas was flapping heavily, wringing the delicate upper spars, or clinging like wet paper round her rigging, and hampering and choking her running gear. Five or six men stood aft watching

us, one right on the taffrail holding a coil of rope, which, as we passed under her stern, he flung into the boat ; the end was caught by Obed, and a turn taken round the foremost thwart. "In port oars!" I shouted ; "pull to starboard, smartly!" and there were we alongside, sheltered indeed from the wind, but rising and falling heavily with the sea. But, then, we were all sailors ; four or five ropes' ends were flung over the side, the gangway unshipped, and in a few moments the whole of us had scrambled on to the deck, Obed being the first, and I the second. Plenty of line being given to the boat, she veered away to leeward, and there she lay dancing upon the sea, clear of the vessel's side.

The first object that met my eyes was the body of a man lying on his back, with his arms stretched beyond his head—as dead as a nail. He looked like a fallen giant ; he was the biggest man I had ever seen. His chest had fallen in, but the breadth of it, with the immense thickness of the arms and legs, the huge fleshy throat, and the great hands, with the fingers almost as

thick as carrots, curled up with the nails pointing into the broad palms, was something to make a man hold his breath. His eyes were wide open, but only the whites of them were visible ; the under jaw had fallen and lay bare a row of ivory-white fangs which a shark might not have disdained, his long reddish locks lay all abroad upon the deck around his head, and gradually creeping away from amongst them was a little river of thick black, treacly-looking blood.

Not very far from where he lay was another man lashed to the mizzen-mast with turn upon turn of rope around his waist and chest, with both his hands made fast and hitched down to his knees, which were also tightly bound. He was as dark as Obed, but his brown was not of the same character, being more of the sun-blacked olive of the South American Spaniard. He was a thin, wiry man, with no other clothes on him than a red shirt and a pair of white trousers ; his naked feet were almost black from the compression of the rope around his legs. I had thought the half-caste about the most ruffianly animal I had ever seen ;

but after beholding this man bound like a wild beast to the mizzen-mast, I was obliged to confess that, so far as villainous expressions went, Obed's face was more than matched here. He glanced at us one by one as we scrambled over the side on to the deck, and just looked at Obed—I shall never forget the desperate ferocity, the murderous wickedness of that look whilst I live—then fixed his eyes on the deck, and never again raised them, nor moved a muscle of his face, though I believe that the strangulation at his chest, legs, and wrists was causing him great pain.

"So," exclaimed Captain Taber, "you've thought better than finish this job, have you? But a pretty cussed mess you've brought the *Jessie* into with your blasted mutineering! Who did that?" he cried, pointing to the dead body.

"I did," answered a burly sailor, an Englishman evidently, and in no sense an ill-looking man. "I wasn't going to be hanged for piracy, and so when we sighted yonder ship, and made out Obed aboard of her, I told Bill here, and Jameson, and Yankee

Joe what I guessed her arrant was, and as we had no hand in this here bloody business in the beginning, we detarmined to end it, and so I struck him down, and the others they seized Picador yonder, and these men joined us."

He poured all this forth in a rapid torrent, pointing as he ceased to two of the men who hung back behind the others.

"I know you had no hand in this, Mat," said the skipper, "an' I reckon you've done me a sarvice that'll make us friends. Are you willing to turn to?" he shouted fiercely to the skulking fellows behind, who were two of the four who had planned and effected the seizure of the barque.

"Ay," replied one of them in a dogged voice, "we'll do our work an' sarve ye honestly if ye'll gie us your word ye'll not peach agin us when we gets to Pernambuco, and that ye'll gie us our discharge there."

The Yankee hung in the wind a moment; he glanced at Obed and they exchanged looks.

"Very well," he said, "let it be so.

Tally on now and get the barkey straight. Mr. Lee, your men'll help us, I hope."

"Certainly," I answered, thinking I would not give much for the chances of the two men when the *Jessie Jackson* should be once more *en route*.

"Here, carry this thing forward out of the road," shouted Captain Taber, indicating the dead body with a lift of his foot. A couple of the men dragged the corpse out of sight. The skipper never seemed to notice the man who was lashed to the mizzen-mast, but springing on to the weather bulwarks and holding on to the rigging, he began to sing out his orders, whilst Obed took the wheel.

Now that he was aboard his own vessel and could deliver his orders I at once saw that the Yankee was a thorough sailor. My four men, in addition to his own crew, made eleven hands for him to control. As I found that I should be only in the road by seconding his orders, I let him have his own way, whilst presently, not being able to endure the sight of the sufferings of the wretch at the foot of the mizzen-mast, I

stepped up to him and eased away the turns around his legs and body and wrists, though without loosing him. He never gave me a "thank you," nor so much as lifted his eyes ; he probably believed that the moment the *Waldershare* was out of sight they would hang him, and I have no doubt they were all lawless enough aboard that vessel to do worse things than that.

By dint of squaring the mainyards, flattening in the foreshets, hauling up the mainsail and lowering the mizzen, the Yankee got his barque to pay off ; and when they had filled away forward and got way on her, they backed the mainyard and hove her to. The sun was now very near the horizon, and I was anxious to regain the *Waldershare* whilst there was still light, for darkness follows sunset quickly in these latitudes. Soon after we had boarded the barque, the *Waldershare* swung her foreyards, and then squaring away fore and aft, came gracefully rolling and plunging past under the barque's stern, when she put her helm down and lay to abreast of us about three hundred yards to leeward, where she re-

mained stationary, waiting for us to rejoin her, her bows rising and sinking like a race-horse pawing the ground and arching his neck eager to be gone, while her decks were like a constellation with the flashing of the sun in her brass and skylights, and the water poured from her bows, as she lifted them, in long white lines.

With the skipper at the wheel, and Obed to make an eighth man aloft, the Yankee would have hands enough to clear away the wreck forward, the more especially as the breeze was moderating, the clouds high, and there was every sign of fair weather. So, telling him I must begone, I sung out to my men to lay aft and get the boat alongside. However, before the Yankee would part with us, he jumped below and brought up a bottle of brandy, and gave each of my men a large dram to drink his health in. At the same time he presented me with a small, very elegantly chased gold box for holding pipe-lights, and begged me to keep it as a little token of his gratitude. He then bade me repeat his thanks to Captain Flanders, wringing my hand re-

peatedly. The poor fellow was really grateful, and I was heartily glad he had got his vessel again ; though, as I glanced at the blood-stain on the deck, and at the man bound to the mizzen-mast, and at the faces of the crew, who, with the exception of two, were foreigners in coloured shirts, black-bearded and with large rings in their ears, I should not have cared to bet a dollar that the Yankee would be let live to see the port he was bound to. To manage such a crew as that a man should never go without a revolver, and wear a steel shirt under his waistcoat.

We gained the *Waldershare* as the upper limb of the sun was hovering on the rugged horizon and looking as though the hull of some great ship was burning there, and her timbers all of a deep scarlet glow; and so quickly did the shadows come running out of the east that, before we had the quarter-boat hoisted, it was almost dark and the stars shining.

Nelly was so overjoyed to see me come over the side, that she forgot her customary prudence and ran to meet me. However,

though Thomas looked up at me with a grin, I doubt if the skipper saw the action. Any way, I passed on to him and made my report, and then came back to Nelly, and stood with her and Thomas watching the barque, telling them what I had seen on board, and producing the Yankee's gift, which I said I should value as a curiosity and as the memorial of a singular adventure.

The barque was astern of us, but had braced her mainyards round and was lying up so as to make a more westerly course than we. She loomed under the stars like a pale cloud, but even with the help of the glass I could not make out how they were managing with their wrecked top-gallant mast, and the hamper of studding-sails and canvas that lay all in a muddle forward. In twenty minutes' time she was a faint glimmering patch on our weather quarter, and then she entirely vanished.

We never knew the origin of the mutiny: the Yankee had told Captain Flanders *how*, but not *why*, it happened, and I could not

discover that the crew had said a word to the men who boarded her with me. But Obed's face had satisfied me that the cause of it was bad treatment, and the Yankee's very reserve made me the more inclined to think so. And do not let the reader flatter himself that incidents of this nature are rare at sea. Fire, tempest, collision, overloaded or leaky ships, by no means make out the whole catalogue of the causes of maritime disaster. Let any man go and examine for himself the crews many vessels ship, and he will agree with me that mutiny and the wilful destruction of ships ought to be included as a fertile factor among the causes of those disasters which are generalized in our ignorance under the heading of "Missing." However, maritime evils are things which landsmen refuse to take any interest in and a writer only proves tedious by endeavouring to point them out.

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